

# I LEFT ENGLAND

by ALASDAIR T. A. LOCH

THE TRAVEL BOOK CLUB

111 CHARING CROSS ROAD LONDON W.C.2



TO MY MOTHER

AND

THE FUTURE

THE FUTURE

OF

THE REPUBLIC OF ECUADOR

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## CHAPTER I

"A CABLE for you-from New York"

coloured official "delivery folders" of reputable organizations peddling dots and dashes have odd receptions

I have seen polar apprehensions freeze faces and "shaking" hip-flasks subsequently victimized I have supported swooning addressees, and have seen innocent telegraphic missives evacuate matronly householders I have seen delivered cables avoided for twenty four hours-

But to people like myself, 'transmitted communications' do more for the liver than the sting of any aggressive grapefruit And so, to the distress of certain of my economic relatives. they have become part of my life

The idea of a letter lostering in a street-corner box (next clearance 12 10 a m Monday) mevitably assumes disturbing proportions in my mind. It becomes an anathema-an irritant

-a lingering pain in the neck-

Consequently, when it is convenient to my circumstances, I send telegrams, cables, radiograms, and receive themthough less occasionally

So that, "Zajtrk je gotov," or "I have drawn your bath," from the plump little, occasionally English speaking Slovene maid, would have given me far more concern than "A cable

I slowly unfolded the Jugoslav telegraph form and struggled with the hesitant pencilled guess work of the Balkan postmistress. Then it suddenly dawned on me that I was being invited to rise from my bed and accompany an expedition--

Part of the deciphered message read "Have reserved berth for you on Grace Liner sailing Ecuador August tenth . . . delighted if you would join our party. Awaiting reply . . ."

I had, of course, known about the expedition In fact I had written suggesting, more as a capricious afterthought than not, that it might include me

Having done so, I had thought no more about it and had left England for a holiday amongst the mountains of Central

Europe

And now as I lay between sheets and watched this neatly capped, bright faced little girl carefully pull up the shutters, as I watched her draw the curtains and let in the rays of the morning sun, as I listened to the three-piece gipsy orchestra playing for a tip below my window, I realized with a mini mum of mental digression that within ten days I'd be "strollin" down Broadway

Yet I was supercitiously amused The cabled itinerary dramatically breathed of 'wild Indians" and "Inca treasure"

References to " that green hell ', or such news headings as "Another expedition sails for Cocos " have usually encouraged me to smile knowingly to myself

But in common with many people and the proverbial cat-I have at one time or another fallen foul of that overwhelming affliction which links chimpanzees to gramophone needles and unsuspecting males to matrimony-that complete urge which incites us to try anything once and which in this case was to lead me through the Panama Canal-

Curiosity 1

I was curious to know about the real South America What possible mental jig saw, I wondered, could ever be conjured by the Londoner, strap-hanging in the warmth of a lighted tube, and superficially glancing twice daily at Reuter? What sort of Latin "Merry Go-Round could ever be pictured, for instance, in the sanctuary of an English garden?

Personal experiences vary so considerably that I had no definite idea But I concluded that the scenes which we in dividually envisioned were not always very accurate, and sometimes entirely wrong I was not very happy about my own conceptions, which amounted to a blurred composite of Chaco wars, fandangos, and lost explorers

Apart from the fact that I had once seen in England a film

depicting head-shrinking Indians of the Upper Amazon, which had been made-in partnership with a British Commanderby the leader of this forthcoming expedition to Ecuador, my knowledge of South American geography was very limited

The "British Commander" had led the first expedition in search of Colonel Fawcett, to Matto Grosso territory This part of South America I had once found on the map Yet until I procured an atlas, after receiving the cabled invitation, I could not have put my finger on a section of the great southern continent, saying "That's Ecuador"

But a little common reasoning, and my professed interest in the Spanish language, should have suggested the transla tion-Equator

Subsequent investigation showed me that Ecuador lay on the western side of the continent-that the Andes split it vertically into two unequal parts-and that it was bounded by the Pacific

Since my return to Europe, I have often held in wonder the discrepancies of my original information on so colourful a continent Yet, I frequently find the same paucity of accurate conception in others

It was with this in mind-despite the many interesting accounts of travel in North and South America by clever authors-that I decided to record this narrative

Surprisingly enough, that great but uncertain manipulator of fact-Hollywood-has not yet dealt to any great extent with this continent south of the Panama Canal

However, some of those Amazonian and even American fantasies that it has produced, leave personal experience as the one reliable medium to a true sense of value in these things

This forthcoming trip meant that I should also visit the United States Within my teach was an opportunity to discover first hand exactly how distorted these Hollywood portrayals had been But it meant immediate action

The cabled phrase "Sailing Equador August tenth" constituted an ultimatum I was already over a thousand miles from London, with New York another odd three thousand farther on It might be reached within the time limit if I could connect with an express liner . .

With varied feelings I swept the "Shipping" of a five-daysold Times It appeared that all the fast vessels had either sailed

or were unlisted

No . . . the Manhattan . . . seven days . . . due to leave Southampton on August 1st . . .

This just made it possible A long journey lay ahead-

Activity . cabled acceptance . . a suitcase lid biting on carelessly backed clothes . . . auf wiedersehen .

An hour or two later, en route to England, I motored across the Juposlavian frontier into Austria

"Breathing fite belching steam . . the Dover train slid smoothly into Victoria . doors swinging . disgorged its human cargo on to a platform"

gorged its human cargo on to a platform "

Some years ago in a thriller I remember reading of something

like this

In my case the "disgorging" seemed interminable Only too conscious that the Manhattan was to sail next day, I held the

too conscious that the Manhattan was to sail next day, I need the listed stems of my immediate stinerary in one hand—

'Phone American Consulate for emergency visa—ring United States Lines to inquire about berth—visit bank in City to arrange transfer—see doctor for health certificate—vaccination for smallpox—inoculation for typhoid—dine with Aunt Beatine at seven forty five—

The train ceased "sliding" . . a last glance at the list before stuffing it into a pocket . directions to a porter

a deadline for the telephones . imprecations at

finding each one engaged . .

These "glass boxed" callers staring vacantly at me and animatedly mouthing—could their need possibly be any greater than mine? Why couldn't they appreciate the urgency of my grimace and humanly replace their receivers on the hook—?

An expensive thing of beauty searching too placidly for a number—why in the box when "directories" hung outside? That City man—impeccably dressed—his umbrella strck (this hot July) swinging on button "A"-one bored hand supporting the receiver near his shoulder-an Erening News rolled readably in the other Could the importance of his trunk-call eclipse those "locals" that I strained to make--?

My mind refused to telepathize or if it was broadcasting, no one heeded the call I paced in small circles by the boxes barely

curbing the temptation to rap on their glass-

A Continental looking female spelling out the "directions", would she finally experiment or bewilderedly leave the Szod

Damn these peop-thank Himmel for that! The rattle of a "'phone-kiosk" folding door-the black Derby'd caller was

departing in disgust

That "breath pinning" mustiness which haunts most station 'phones-stale tobacco-tenacious perfume-lethal in every respect

"Chester is waiting for you—go ahead please"
The only Chester whom I knew was Chester Edwards, mining in Africa I had given him that name myself having found it in Eddie Cantor's film Wheeter It had clume to him---

Valuable moments wasted in being told that Chester wanted me (Oh, Chester!) and over my subsequent explanation that I hadn't called the town

Replacing the receiver I tapped my foot impatiently on the floor and waited a minute that seemed like ten, to be sure that I had lost Chester Then I dialled a Langham number---

"American Consulate General"

"My name is Loch-how can I obtain a visa so that I can sail for the States to-morrow?"

"You will need a letter of introduction from your banker, your solicitor, or your firm, explaining your financial situation -the purpose of your visit-and the duration of your stay in America Then, provided your passport is already endorsed

for travel to the United States, a visa will be granted --- " "Where are you?"

"In Cavendish Square We open at tune a m If you come along then . ."

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"Thank you." "You're welcome."

As the following evening gave its cue to the Battersea Power Plants, Colles Crotty and I rolled up to Waterloo. Colles, then "at Oxford", had been with me in Australia....

"S.S. Manhattan?" inquired a voice in the world outside the CAT.

An undersized porter was heaving at my trunk-struggling

over what should have been a two-man job-

"Are both you gentlemen sailing?" as he looked un-successfully for further luggage. "Only you, sir?" nodding to me. "Platform 13. Your trunk will be put on the ship."

Then as his two-wheeler trolley supported its disheartening weight: "Thank you, sir—you won't need me again—"
Colles and I explored for Platform 13. It was crowded as we

passed by each carriage of the boat-train. Even if only one in six of these people were to be passengers, it seemed that the ship must be popular,

We tracked down that "Reserved Seat" and, having done so, I decided to label its qualification more obtrusively, before stepping back to the platform. Normally I put my hat on the carriage seat if I am wearing one.

But to-day I was not.

All right then, my newspaper----But I'd left it in the car.

Well then, my coa-

Suddenly that sensation of iced water being poured into my stomach.

My sub-zero armour, with which I had intended the snowclad Andes to mean so little, had somehow vanished into a Jasper Maskelvne world-

"Where the something-or-other is my coat?" I thrust at the luckless Colles, with visions of a pet razor and imaginary fivers which I might have stuffed hurriedly into its pockets.

"I . . . with your coat?" he replied, good-humouredly pointing out my own carelessness.

My face lost its usual friend-to-children expression-

"Hell alone knows what I've left in it Usually the last and most important things " And so Colles went back to challenge time It was an im

possible race . . To overcome my disgust I returned to the platform to

survey all these probable passengers There were faces that I tecognized, amongst these chattering, gesticulating peopleof the theatre-of the sports world-of London society socalled----

News photographers lostered further towards the engine One or two of them leant against a four wheeled luggage trolley The majority skirted the gathering around a red haired lanky youth, freckled and "camel hair" coated-

Budge was returning to America Perry and his wife, Helen Vinson, were there to see him away

Slinking autograph hunters swept hawk-eyes from face to face Parting friends handled special pleasantries I ruminated as to how long they could buoy these sentiments if the train refused to leave

Finally, the dead line came and the boat train drew

Corridors remained crowded-people struggled to lean out and wave Cupped hands broadcast unrestrained last counsels -screwed up "Late Extras" flagged au revoir-

The platform receded

Then with Waterloo behind us and these animated communications no longer possible, passages began to clear and the philosophic filed resignedly to their seats

With the dusk curtaining those "eye-sore" backyards, which are usually the last an American sees of London, we rattled towards Southampton where a primed Manhattan marked time

"Well, it's a grand old town---"

"Me for next summer-"

"Oh no-not after those Bond Street headaches-"

"Why, you old meanie, you You know I econ---" An efferyescent American matron overflowed to the couple, with whom she was obviously "travelling".

"That Ivor Novello-so clever-so refined And that Old

Vic The-ater-I just bad to go again "

The undergraduette travelling home with mother animatedly joined the conversation

"Did you take that tour to Stratford-I'm just crazy about Anne Hath-away's garden-all that colour And her bed-just the cutest thing . can you imagine, the daughter had to creep through the mother's room-"

"The idea-you speaking that way, Laura Leigh me tell you, young lady, these roadhouse parties back home .

"Aw, Mom, you wouldn't

The grey-haired woman next to me sitting quietly by the

window shook her head to my query about the draught
"No, suh," she volunteered in lazy tones, "even on a rail track A' can inhale this good old country. A' surely hate to leave these little lanes that lead to such funny thatched vil-

lages " "Did you manage to see much of England?" I asked her, as her languid praises continued, covering phases of English

"Well, suh, A' certainly did try m'best in those two weeks to see just all a visitor should see ....."

"Then you visited the Tower?"

"Land sakes, yes suh Wind sor Castle, Eton College, Hampton Court, Canter bury And of course Westminster and the Changing of the Guard "

"Splendid, but you spoke of the English countryside as

though you had been further afield . .

"Yes, suh, my sister here" (drawled introduction to a slightly younger edition) "hired a small automobile and we drove to Clovelly village"

"Not . . North Devon?"

"Yes, suh, in Devon shire"

"All in two weeks?"

"Well, suh, we didn't stay We drove to Loch Lomond "You what? As well? But that's in Scot \_\_\_ You visited Edinburgh?"

"We certainly di- What did you call it?"

. Mary Queen of Scots . . . "Edirburgh The Castle "Edin-butt-er?"

oren, caa you imagine . we called it Ed in berg, like Pritishingh back in America " "Do you first that pronunciation here diff-rs very much

from your own?" "Why yes, suh, there certainly are some words. For instance, the other day in a store-what was that word,

Caroline?

"A loom-in um." "Yes, that was it, aloom in um. You say---?"

She repeated it slowly 'Well, suh, it sounded mighty fun-ny to us Words like 'thor-ough-ly', 'cer-err-ony', B tmyou English slur them so quickly Now A' ing-ham\* lived in Birm-ing ham forty years-

"Birmingham, Alabama?" "That's the town, 'nd A'd never heard it called anything but

Birm-ing him

"And your home-now?" "Heart of America When it's bot why there isn't any place Kansas City 15 hotter . . when it's cold . why

lit-er-ally the coldest town

"Kansas City-and you muss the South?" "We certainly do, jet we like it where we are Realions"

agents just go on talking about our residential district. They claim it's a model for the rest of America " "What else would interest rue if I were to Kansas Gty?"

"Well, suh, the sunt stockyards-" "Stockyards?" It seemed odd that a woman should recom-

mend such an attraction. And somehow when I thought of Kansas Gry I automatically envisioned all the countrier's of Amencan civilization ... hard'y cark . . . It liber to "Why, suh, A' don't know how those people could per

along w thoes their stockyards I on wall certainly want to "Will I --- " Then to see in the blow, "I have bird to

much arrongst them in Australia----

"You bave-you are Australian?"

"Not exactly, although I would like to think so Some of my best years have been spent in Australia"

"Yes, suh, A've heard tell it's a mighty fine country A lot

of Americans go there now "

The young husband opposite to me was listening attentively He looked at his wife

"Australia," he echoed, "we've been there, haven't we,

honev?"

He turned to me again "Right after our marriage we went hell bent for Honolulu, but the trip seemed too short there were nice people aboard we just carried right on We knew we could see Hawan on the way back The Austra-

lians certainly gave us a wonderful time" We discussed places that we both knew and I asked him

about his home

tust

"Santa Barbara, California quiet little town

far enough away from my business in Los Angeles" This was an interesting coincidence The SS Santa Barbara was to take me south from New York I mentioned

this

Grace Line to Ecuador? Smart ships, their huh saloons staffed with star liners do the California run women and Chinks-"

"Their-what-?"

'Chinks in the bars-American stewardesses waiting at table-pretty too-"

His wife broke in "Oh, so they are" He ignored the in

terruption "So you'll see Panama The way those Army boys have when an American sees that fixed things down there Canal Zone he feels good "

"The way you said you felt in Paris? ' His wife had turned

conversationalist

It appeared that besides England they had also done the Continent Her naive remarks recalled excitedly the Lido at Venice, and included Buda and Pest in a way that a child of Mayfair might describe a journey to a Maidenhead Club

An alert American with greying temples who had also been

T I

seeing Europe recounted his adventures to the rest of the compartment

As I looked out into the darkness and listened to the familiar "diddley-dop" of the wheels over sleepers, I could sense it gradually giving way to a quieter motion Lights appeared ahead and our speed was decreasing

Five minutes later the train was edging round the docks

"There she is-that's her," as we approached an illuminated monster

"And all American"

"How about this new Cunarder?" a fair voice demanded "We'll build one bigger and better, trust America-"

A line of white-coated, peak-capped stewards stretched

smartly along the platform Past difficulties seemed to fade away altogether Here awaiting my pleasure was the lighted sea-castle which had been my goal for what had seemed an infinite length of time, in

actual fact two days Expectancy overwhelmed me I repressed with all available self-control barbarian instincts to "war whoop" My mind was rampant as I looked at the round shafts of light in the darkness, beyond the barriers, which was the Manhattan America lay ahead Anything, I considered, could happen กดพ-

would you step to one side, please." And I stood watching the other passengers file on board

At last, except for a few officials and a seaman or two, I

appeared to be alone on the dock "Now, Mr Loch, you obtained a ticket only this afternoon"

"Correct " "Why do you want to go to America?"

"What again---?"

After the cross-questioning that I had undergone to achieve my visa in London this seemed unnecessary repetition Half an hour later, I could quite appreciate the need for a double check on ports. But at the time a child might as well have been 25ked why it wanted to see Tom Mix or to have that pink bull seye

For a moment in my disgust I sought some verbal stiletto, but I remembered the proverb about fewer files being caught with vinerar

"I expect to be in the United States only two days
joining an expedition sailing to South America"

"How much money have you?"

At any previous period in my life this question might have touched a very sore point, but now I felt that I could submit my reply with assurance

"One hundred pounds with me in American Express Cheques a few dollars my bank is making a sub-

stantial transfer to New York "
I mentioned the sum, it seemed attractive enough to me

"I'm afraid that won't do "

I counted slowly to ten, then looked at my watch in annoy-

ance The ship was already due to sail.

What status had this hatless fellow dressed in every-day clothes, who aimed these questions at me? No, that was indiculous reasoning, obviously it was his job Looking at the gangway, the tempetation to brush by and continue further arguments on deck was extremely difficult to suppress Surely those dockers were preparing to take it away.

A conference was taking place between my "inquisitionist" and another I chewed my lip with annoyance and wished them both to the nearest inferno Hadn't others ever made last minute bookings? What then, are these stories of film stars chartering speed boats to pursue liners down Southampton water.

The conversationalists nodded perceptibly in my direction. I had now reached that pitch of up-in the-air resignation which a defendant must experience when the 'twelve good men' file back

"Will you fill up this form?"

Sezing the offered pen, I dashed off information as to my next of kin my peculiarities (I left this blank) whether I advocated the overthrow of a Government by force Such damfool questions I told myself, was there to be no limit to their absurdity?

The docks shuddered under a terrific blast-the Manbattan

was notifying all and sundry of her immediate intentions.

Completing the form, I was allowed to embark with both hands full of documents . . . into a small world, that might have been America. . . .

### CHAPTER II

ON a voyage, even of a mere week, it is important that there should be other amusements than eating, sleeping and stargazing

And the United States Lines manage to find a diversion for every moment

Fresh summer sea air circulating pleasantly round a cabin does something to you. It either adds another somnolent hour to a peaceful reverue, commits the passenger to a cold, or makes him feel like a spring chicken. I never go out of my way to identify myself with live stock, but on any morning at sea I'm an early but So that having put one might on the Atlantic Ocean under my belt, I ignored the steward's "apple and tea" and set out to catch the worm, or rather in this case, the gymnassium

Hampton Court's maze and I have never yet "had the pleasure", which fact was brought home to me as I padded my canvas shoes along corridors, down starways, and through safety doors, all the time trying to get somewhere Finally after one viccious cricle, I began again until eventually echoes of splashing came galloping past my ears

Ha, so others were also out to pounce on that morning worm Yes, a pre breakfast dip was a pleasant thought, it had apparently occurred to many

Somewhere ahead of me were the raised voices of watery eared swimmers and I stumbled over the ledges of safety doors

until I was on the scene

Only in the hanging room of a mass butchery have I been puvileged to view such a variety of carcases as dropped into that azure pool. One by one they fell on top of each other from beneath a notice prohibiting diving, whilst others clung in spray below the head of a gargoyle from which sea water cascaded.

The "room", large and any, was electric with 'oomph' Slashing table tennis was being played to one side of the bathers and ping pong bails dropped often in the water, slowly heaving to the Atlantic swell outside I felt pretty good, for everyone looked cherful

Continental and American voices flung banter about the bath with a familiarity which offered evidence that these people

had embarked at Hamburg

Very reluctantly I had to turn away from this vital atmosphere for, with a day-old vaccination making a barbecue of my arm, this fun was not for me

Across the passage and through another open door some one was energetically getting nowhere on an exercise bicycle So even in the "gym", I was not the early bird Who then were these "pistol beaters" who had been first off the mark?

A well built fellow, snoring like a horse, punished the punch bag with professionally inned consistency Walter Neusel was keeping battle form for America. His flaxen baired trainer, a slightly built man, leant against a mechanical horse, clock no hand, watching the "work-out" like a hawk.

Outside the gymnasium Neusel undermined my ideas con cerning championship training, by "chain smoking" cigars

I played with him one evening at some "dog racing" competitions Very genial, always smiling, his friendly enthusiasm at another's win illuminated his agreeable nature

"What number have you?" he would ask before a race "I

have five-do you think it has a chance?"

He had recently fought Petersen at the Albert Hall, and mere shipboard hearsay claimed that he was heading for Joe Louis The "Brown Bomber" had not then reached his present position

"Why, that guy Louis is a killer," commented my cabin companion

To many passengers the prerogative of choosing a table, or stable-mate, is one of the high spots of the voyage But this is where I am usually sold a pup

Only twice have I been pitched by stewards into harmonious meal time "oases" and these two winners (on voyages to and from West Africa) were the direct result of my taking no steps to choose where I should sit

to choose where I should sit

The less fortunate occasions still skirmish at the back of my
mind when I think of the sea

There had been that soup swilling halitosist, amusing to begin with, but whose bathplug behaviour and pole-cat exhalations on an England Egypt voyage caused jutters among the women at our table And juttering women—

Then that affluent but less pleasant individual homing it from Singapore, who had so graphically detailed his achievements at deck sports and in the same breath disparaged those of others

And again that other mutton-chop John Bull on the same Malayan voyage who used to cool his soup by pouring in beer, not just a spoonful but half a pint at a time—who would 'dunk' jammy or gorgonzola rolls in his coffee, munch ing at the sodden mess with the leaking stream wending its way round and down his neck

All little things But, somehow, after the first five performances you find yourself waiting tensely for them to occur Anyhow, on the Manhattan, I decided to leave these things to chance

The steward, a ruggedly individual American, showed me to a vacant six place table. I wondered about the other five chairs. Would my catch be a set of wise-cracking Whitelers and Woolseys? Would I be landed with seven days of affectation in my good ear as had been the case on a P & O tup to Marseille?

With the grape fruit, two of my future table-companions produced themselves—father and son—and were seated at my immediate left. The father—I afterwards discovered him to be a Brook Street specialist—was of medium build, a very slight suggestion of Otto Kruger. From the son, emanated more than a flavouring of Freddie Bartholomew. Automatically, as we nodded to each other, I placed them as English, one hundred per cent, I decided. I learnt that they were, in fact, American, of Dutch extraction, from Chicago.

We exchanged destinations This doctor, who practised in England, had called his offspring over to an English public from West Africa) were the direct result of my taking no steps to choose where I should sit.

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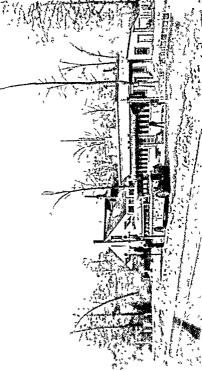
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school Three years he assured me had brought about some thing which he intended the Chicago family to appreciate for themselves And so, this trip

Then as the inner man took their attention, I noticed something in green unobtrusively slip into another of the chairs For three or four meals she was mute except when whispering her order to the steward Then under the disarming atten tions of the doctor, it came out She was a nurse, Irish, and visiting her sister in New York She was more tited than self-conscious, having just left behind her a nightmare of long hours, late-night "extra work" and relinquished week-end "free periods" To accumulate sufficient leave for the voyage she had also done overtime. Her working sessions had aver aged twenty hours daily, always at somebody's beck and call Her subsequent remarks drawn together penned a picture of not only long hours and near slavery, but with it all there had been poor food, lectures, compulsory prayers, and stupid restrictions. I didn't envy her. And the doctor agreed that English hospital conditions for nurses had not been what they might be

There were times when this girl, a qualified nurse, had to scrub stone floors, polish windows and do chars' work, whilst patients called constantly from their beds

And here she was, aboard an Atlantic liner, heading for a city where anything could happen, having temporarily cut away from this drudgery But it was days before we learnt all this

When she took her place at the table on that ' first mortung'', and after fifteen munutes still gazed at her plate, mutchke and expressionless I felt oddly uncomfortable and awaited the next arrival with interest

He was a Scot a Scot with a complex in fact two
They were California, and grapefruit

When he spoke of one, he usually coupled the other

"California," he told us, "grows the best in the world Now take Indian River grapefruit is this 'Indian River'?"

The steward, a quick witted man, saw his cue

And so we learnt of Californian orchards, of Californian

committees by force—approved or threw out members of the State football teams—worshipped at his own shrine——

Why, yes, she understood that he did all these things, and more. . . .

"I guess we all kinda hate'm," was her comment.

The expression "Georgia Peach?" I had begun to understand on that first morning at breakfast, but it was only whilst watching the dancing one evening that I really appreciated the full definition.

"She's from Georgia," somebody volunteered as a vision floated by. This glamorous creature appeared to have so few defects that I decided at once to dispense with the delay of any formal introduction.

When the music stopped, forgetting the puffed arm that I had pampered for five days, I rose to conquer.

Perhaps destuny stepped, n, as I have occasionally found that it does, for with force enough to fell a buffalo a flustered matron cannoned from the dance floor into my thriving vaccination. In discomfort we flopped beside each other.

After that I didn't bother to "meet" the Georgia Peach, There would be more "peaches" in the "orchard", I felt, than had ever crossed to Europe, and nursing a very sore arm I gave up the chase.

But such beauty has never since crossed my path.

A doctor on the Manhattan, who gave me my second inoculation, stared hard at my three recent vaccination marks

intion, started nard at my three recent vaccination marks
"Hm'm . . . very odd," he commented, as he looked at
them strangely.

So I asked him to explain what was odd

". . . Why these English doctors give three infections. If it's going to 'take', one will be enough, and you undergo a third of the discomfort."

I liked the trim American uniform of his cheery Scottish nurse. The wardrobes of English hospitals, I decided, were so yery far behind.

This bright little person spoke to me of America, of her sister whom she had brought over from Glasgow a year before.

"Has she settled in yet . . . does she never feel homesick for Scotland?"

"Settled in? Why she's completely American . . . loves the people . . . copies their ways . . ."

A similar case to this was an English girl on board who had married an American

As we leant over the railings and studied the calm waters between Ambrose Lightship and New York, she admitted having given way to the pestering of her family She had returned to England. . . .

"They were at Paddington to meet me It was so nice to see

them all, but . . ."

Otherwise she had hated every minute.

"After America people seemed so depressed—so restrained -so affected-so unhealthy-so dull . . ."

Kitchens and bathrooms had irritated her also.

"In America they are so spotless," she explained

These unhappy reflections of her regretted visit to England sped away when I asked about her husband

"Within twenty hours we'll be lunching together . . . no entreaties from the Old Country will ever . . .

After breakfast one morning whilst I changed pounds for Uncle Sam's "greenbacks", before the usual run on the purser's office, a woman asked me the exact decimaled rate of exchange.

For a week the dollar had been "fluctuating" at the most a point either way

I apologized for not knowing precisely.

"For pity's sake-changing your money and you haven't determined the rate?"

"Well roughly of course---"

"Mercy me, why I've never done that . . . always waited for the high figure . . the inconvenience is nothing if I'm getting full value. . . ."

This was my first introduction to the United States business brain . . . no wonder so many American matrons could travel. I reflected

Maceys, an immense New York cash-on the-nail store ex-

hibits a big slogan to Americans. It is SMART TO BE THRIFTT runs the hoarding

There was that United States Naval Officer, homeward bound from the Philippines to San Diego, California.

I made the obvious comment about it seeming the longer

"Most of us join the Navy to see the world," he commented, "but."

At the time I hadn't heard the Fred Astaire song and its dreary conclusions

This officer had crossed to China . . . had "done" Saigon, Bangkok and Singapore

He had occupied hotel rooms in Sumatra and Ceylon . . . Bombay's Tai Mahal had also sheltered him

Then had come the inevitable Near-East triangle . . . Suez, the Sphinx and Mena House, then back to the ship at Port

No, he hadn't seen Jerusalem, but his zig-zag path across Europe left my mouth rather widely aiar

Europe left my mouth rather widely apar

But he had missed England apart from the doubtful
spectacle of Southampton Docks

"Why?"

"Been there before," he explained, "for three days. Anchored in the Thames River at Til . . . Til . . . Til something

"Hired one of those London buggies," he continued, "then I really knew fear . a hell fire driver with whiskers floating about the gear-change drove on the wrong side . . . they all did . . . one night was enough I went to relations in Surrey . ."

Why were English girls supposed to look awkward ... have big feet? His cousins weren't that way .. and they didn't "talk Cockney" ...

He guessed America was just wrong again

Sauntering about the ship on the "last night before New York", I wandered along to the aft saloon and slumped into one of those all leather chairs

Beside me was a table Then I noticed that somebody else shared at as well

"Those are pretzels"

"I beg your pardon"

"Pretzels-were you looking at them?"

"Er-yes, possibly-occasionally my head is right up there," I confided to this plump young woman

"Been balancing on my trunk," I continued, "and now that I've humbled it, I am wondering about that toothbrush and razor---"

"Are they big things in your life?"

"Left my first set behind in a coat," I elucidated, "must shave to-morrow

America on half a beard, I ruminated-no it couldn't be done

must drink "Well, try a pretzel . mm hm-salty something with them . uh huh, I like beer

And on this lubricant we discussed the approaching metropolis of New York ,,

"I'm a stenographer there—but I live in New Jersey "Going home at week-ends?"

"Nope-every day "

"But New Jersey 15 a State

"Surely . . . but just across the river "

Did I know anybody in New York? She would gladly show

me "the Town" . . ". . . the Rainbow Room-Casino in the Park-the Astor Roof-Grant's Tomb-the Cotton Club-Harlem-"

"Try anything once," I offered with reservation, "but for some reason or another my concern in New York will be Ecuador, South America-flora-fauna-Indians and things---"

"Sounds thriling," stiffing a yawn

"Hope you're right . . . and incidentally I have only about a day in the States-people to meet-equipment to buy . . .

so I'm afraid the Rambow Room and Harlem . . . " "Sure-just thought you might be lonely . . "

We wandered over to a 'fruit machine"-the only vacant one-there were several in the saloon.

"We'll need a dime . yes, the small one . . . like your sixpence"

"Right"

She fed the voracious machine

Grand fun—bad luck that time, try again—this handle takes some pulling—what, no jack pot?

"They're fixed," she shook the handle violently

We moved to another machine temporarily vacant

"Say, let's try again-I'll need some more dimes

Amusing game, I thought, helps to pass the time We passed a great deal of it there

"You baven't any more?"

Having extracted change from the steward five times and handed what seemed to be my sixty seventh dime I began to take notice and review the situation

take notice and review the situation

The dimes didn't worry me but this cold blooded feminine
indifference did I was being played for a—what was that
American expression?

"Change in my cabin—if you'd excuse me for a moment.

I unsociably never meant to return

There is usually something strangely depressing and occasionally exciting about a last night aboard ship. I suppose it

can be summed up as "expectancy"

From the Manhattan we could mentally "smell" America approaching, chiefly through a conjured visualization of New York with its "scrapers", in fact through everything with which the English newspapers care to typify that modern world There was that feeling which always envelops me on the "home-stretch" between the local bus stop and our "hearth".

But this wasn't 'home", I had never been to New York Yet, as with the majority of other English passengers, I had a rough but misguided idea as to what lay ahead, although our

individual envisioning probably differed

We could all "see" the cluster of tall buildings, though many refused to entertain the suggestion that they were chiefly confined to the Wall Street district. A few saw the America to come through recollections of Empire State Building photographs and one die hard was genuinely "surprised" to hear

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that the United States "possessed gardens" How the ears of those American passengers much have swelled

Everywhere on board ship an almost senious air of quiet expectancy overhung the passengers. After a week's casual iding in the artificial life of this luxury liner, they seemed to be spiritually hardening themselves for a "battle" shead—the Americans for a quick "getaway" to their "time squeezing" business back home—the Europeans preparing to launch themselves in pace with the tempo to come

But what tempo---->

The tempo of high powered taxi-cabs which, according to Hollywood, slashed their squealing tyres through American life —the tempo of fast talking salesmen who, according to the same informant, could sell real estate to the judge during a criminal trial—the tempo of the off menioned "surging Broadway" of Harlem-of Coney Island—of screaming strens—"wise-cracking" police—of rackets—of floods, fire, toots, lynchings, famine, drought—of mass deaths—in fact, the tempo of the "movie" America

"Small groups meet for Mensendieck

"For-I'm sorry, would you say it again--"

"Mensendieck work invaluable for absorbing the first principles of posture . "

I was being told about the Gloucester School of the Theatre
—Gloucester, Massachusetts, apparently an hour or so from
Boston

". has as its purpose the accurate training of the in dividual in self-directed body mechanics. The attainment of this technique results in functional beauty the correct use of the muscles in standing, walking, sitting. A conscious control of the whole body is established which is finally assimilated and becomes automatic instead of being forgotten and disused."

Quite a long and sober discourse for such a young woman "But if the course is concentrated into eight weeks and concludes at the end of this month, you won't catch much of it?" I quented

"No-for me that's over-completed my time there-a play

26 (1/4) I LEFT ENGLAND

a week for those high-powered eight—and the school put me on Broadway——"

on broadway—

The flying start which the Gloucester Little Theatre School had given this amazingly vital young woman in two "high-powered" months had subsequently led her beyond Broadway

powered" months had subsequently led her beyond Broadway to a London season from which she was now returning. Fanatics invariably irritate rather than recruit me but for

Fanatics invariably irritate rather than recruit me but for years I have been a pawn to any fanaticism of the theatre-

So that during this trip over I absorbed many facts about this dynamic Gloucester Little Theatre course, and I pass a few of them on for those whom it may interest.

Novelist-playwright May Sarton had once passed through this dramatic mill. Graduates have acted with Ethel Barrymore, Ina Claire, Katherine Cornell, and a host of other

famous names——
Controlling the carefully-picked staff of twelve was Mrs.

Florence Evans—the Mrs. Evans according to her ex-pupil a very vital lady who also found time to run the Boston School of Public Speaking when not preparing new stars for Broad-

way's constellation—

The Little Theatre was apparently built on the water's edge of a very beautiful Massachusetts' bay.

"Cut your expedition and rise to heights via Mrs. Evans'

Theatre—"
I laughed at the idea of relinquishing a real wild Indian-cumTreasure hunt, but my laugh was superfluous for I subsequently learnt that the Gloucester School is famous in the

world of the American Theatre.

Sometime before we slipped into New York harbour "quarantine", the Dutch-American doctor of my table joined

me to watch car headlights from a starboard deck.

As we drew on American weed and my friend pointed out an illuminated tower, deck chairs were dragged up behind us.

an illuminated tower, acek crairs were dragged up benind us.
"Of course, I'll be frightfully keen for you to call on me in
Hollywood—just ring the studio and I'll have them send a
"car..."

.It seemed to be the treble voice of some very excited English female.

"Y'know I'm not sure actually where I shall stay—suite at the Bev —Wilshire' I suppose—then perhaps a house in the 'Hills'——"

The voice momentarily took on a deeper note—one of reflective, contemplative meditation—yet, as I thought then, rather unbecoming for any girl in films

"Of course there's the Ambassador's"-languidly

The original shrill note returned

"Y'know we of the film world are so tushed—our souls don't really belong to us—make-up—photographers—fittings—and our post——"

"Post" came a young man's voice

"Fan mail," the other explained "Of course I shall probably engage a secretary to attend to it—no, I must have a secretary, it is not devastating having to reply to people whom you haven't even net——"

"Y'know Aunt says that I must be careful what I spend," the voice went on "It's so terribly foolish to economise in Hollywood—so John says—must have a car—be seen everywhere—"

The intended audience came to life again

"But the expenses provided by your contract ..."

"Yes, my contract may be arranged to cover everything, but .."

"May be?"

"Well, it's all not quite settled Y'see when Aunt and I met John-"

"John---"

"Oh."

"He has an uncle .."

Here a name was mentioned which is occasionally listed with the supporting casts of American films. Recently it had been coupled with the 'lion's part' in a secondary English film.

"When he heard how I was struggling for recognition amongst the 'extras'—he was most unhappy—said, if I went to Hollywood, he'd . . ."

There appeared to be no limit to the fame which this hightitched voice would reach

Curious to set eyes on this "star of the morrow", the doctor and I glanced behind us-then looked at one another.

Here was no ravishing beauty, shimmering in an expensive evening cloak-no simple little English girl whose pleasantly determined face expressed desire to "make good in films". Metely two youths lolling in canvas-one pimply-the

other not.

The latter rose and stretched-

"I'd better pack, it's getting late-decent of you to tell me .

about yourself---" "Well, old thing, I hope if you are out that way-just ring

the studio." I looked again at the spotted youth-perhaps his boy friend

did meet him in Hollywood-perhaps he didn't.

But eight months later I saw that same pimply face or its double-heard the same voice or its double-taking soda fountain orders in a "downtown" Los Angeles café.

### CHAPTER III

FOR the third time from that uncanny, heated atmosphere I hear that voice again

"Tea, sir," it is rasping Then again "Tea, sir "

The repeated words seem to be hammering at my brain "Tea, sir Tea sir Tea, sir "

"SIX O'CLOCK AND THA, SIR."

I don't bother to subject my opties to the violence of an early opening I know that I have been wrapt in slumberous reverse, whisked through a world of peculiar fancy

It has been an uncomfortable sort of dream, an infusion of mountain crags—of gipsy dancing—of a little chapel above pine-wood forests—of Serbian soldiers idling at a nearby hillside inn—of a precipice fall and a pine tree bounding towards me

An infusion, in fact, of things pleasant and unpleasant. In this dream I have suffered an oddly comfortable black-out, for a time actually toying with the idea that I was dead—that I had fallen—been impaled, at the bottom of a valley

But no I realize now that it's just my uncontrolled mind again With my eyes still closed, I appreciate that "early to bed 'is the thing, and less of this mountain climbing

"SIX O'CLOCE, SIR SIX O'CLOCK."

"Dobra Utero," I breathe as I wait to hear the shutters and curtains drawn

cuttains drawn

But I don't hear them Instead my shoulder is shaken, shaken hard

'For a guy landing first time in New York ... you're certainly sleeping "

No shutter divided sunbeams, just electric light No Jugoslavian bedroom, just a ship's cabin No plump little Slovene maid, just a brisk white-coated steward

"Called you a dozen times"

He sets down an orange on a plate beside my teacup

No, I haven't packed my cut-throat ...

It is marking time by my berth when the steward drags me from my nocturnal fantasy to a discussion concerning early luggage on deck

Six a m and barely half light

The steward though brisk and practical has something of the artist in him. New York is his city. Throughout the voyage he has spoken of it. conversationally dissected for me the various New Yorks in one

He has arranged this hour for my first and "best impression of the Town" He wants me to see Manhattan lighted . the "Towers" by night

From his description it is a scene which tattoos a lasting impression. I have told him that it is a sight to which I have looked forward. And so he has called me at six o'clock, when it is day—and yet night.

Yes, it is still "night"—the illuminations of which he has spoken so much, which make such spectacular photographs, should be there

Then if I am to be a "sponge" to the steward's sense of showmanship, why am I in bed? I have only to ask myself before I am out

And now that my liver has withstood this shock, I find en thusiasm subjecting me to everything it's got It is quite difficult to repress the inclination to catapult to the porthole and to ward it off, I continue a momentary discussion on luggage I feel like an infant about to be shown an ostrich With the slightest encouragement I could do Mickey Mouse capers and clap "Goody goody". The steward has certainly sold me on whatever it is that I am to see and every minute it is growing lighter. I find that I cannot

concentrate—that I must, even with summoned "dignity", push my head through the porthole So I give up the struggle

Not as dark as I had thought Yet lights are still about—a

Not as dark as I had thought Yet lights are still about—a harbour beacon—in the distance bluish lights

But what lights? I peer again Strange ghostly glimmers suspended in the morning mist

As my eyes wean themselves from the brilliant glare of the

cabin, slender, barely discernible shapes frame these distant lights A strange gripping feeling commandeers my arteries, yet what I have seen does not quite scale my ladder of expectation These are certainly they! Lights that we have heard about . -New York lights-a constellation that is the "Manhattan Towers"-in this case, partly fogbound-

But their "splendour", of which we read and hear so much. where is it? Where is the brilliance, the magnificence, that is

said to mark the New York all night scene?

The melody "Lullaby of Broadway", permanently grafted in my brain by a "radio-gram armed brother, sees its chance and parades its lyrics across my mind

". Manhattan 'Babies' don't sleep tight until the dawn ... They run on "Sleep tight, Ba by sleep

the milkman's on his way

Who else but the milkman could be abroad, at this zero hour, among those cold cañons of steel and mortar ahead? Obviously it is too much to expect the 330,000 lights of the "Empire State Building", for instance, to be kept burning for eccentrics arriving in New York Unknown to my slightly disillusioned spirits, I am not to see the spectacle which means so much to the steward-a dazzling, fully lighted New York from the waters of the harbour-until the eve of my return to Europe, nearly nine months from now But not knowing this, my eyes gorge everything that the porthole will allow. It seems to become perceptibly lighter in the five minutes that I am there As the silhouettes that are skyscrapers take definite form, I become as enthusiastic as any "arty" steward as any schoolboy

After all, I muse, I have good reason to be This is my first visit to America

But the hovering steward (now in one of his practical moments) intetrupts my train of thought He speaks of quarantine, of baggage to be taken on deck

He is impatient but masks it with over-attention-for this to him is the most important day of the voyage-the day that I shall show appreciation .

Everything is packed but my razor and pyjamas I tell him

that if he returns in fifteen minutes . . .

He leaves and I pick up my razor. It is a new one and was

bought for the voyage.

I put it down and commence to slide and dab my brush over the surface of the shaving "cream". Its slap-slap squelching sound in the small wooden bowl is very satisfying. It seems to be saying: "I am marking the beginning of a new and very hie day..."

The bowl of "cream" is Continental and for ten days it has

helped my razor with that little extra something.

But I am not conscious of what I am doing. My mind is

journeying ahead.

Who are these people whom I am to accompany to South America? What are their individual aims? For what reasons have they attached themselves to the Expedition? What does each man hone to gain? Are they all scientists?

I have not met any one of them, but the leader is related to

As a British officer he should feel pleased with his record. He has a number of expeditions to his credit . . . as well as trekking experiences all over the world.

I reflect . . . any trip with him should be worth while. An important American museum is sponsoring the enterprise. The itinerary that I have read and re-tead on the way over intimates that dull moments will be few. It even suggests that at times the trip will be heardlous—

I smile as I think of this . . . good window dressing . . .

Yet, is it?

I mentally review the "programme", as I slide the cutthroat across one check. I ask myself: "Why shouldn't there be a 'tribe of hostile Indians of whom little is known massacring peaceful natives' on the Amazon tributaries in Ecuador?"

Why shouldn't there be a "golden hoard worth millions",

hidden beside old Inca trails, in that country?

It is history and a proved fact that the Incas hid considerable quantities of their accumulation of gold from the conquering Spaniards . . . somewhere . . .

Where then is there any cause or reason to ridicule a quest

for the recovery of part of it?

I recollect my Aunt's words as I dined with her before leav-

ing London "People have been searching for centuries for the Incas treasure Why should you"

To these sage words I might have replied "But not, dear Aunt, with the equipment that we shall take with us

strong reinforced equipment the very best "
Since then I have remembered that it has taken eight
months to organize this expedition. Most of these have been

taken up in research and the study of old Spanish documents relating to the Conquest and the Kingdom of the Incas

A good man is to lead the party—a responsible New York

A good man is to lead the party—a responsible New York "Foundation" is behind it—

My mind wanders again to the main object of the expedition It is hard to believe that "wild Indians" still exist

Yet once again, what do I really know of South America? I have met the man who led the first party to find Fawcett there were times when he expected a similar fate——

Then if there are 'wild men" in Brazil why not in this

country called Ecuadot?

Their alleged mode of massacre conjures a very bloody vision. Bodies of peaceful Indians, says the itinerary, have

been found stuck with fifty or sixty war spears
This seems a little doubtful ten spears perhaps

Arms and legs, it says also, have been found 'lopped from victims''

God! What a mess, I reflect, as for want of a better subject

my mind dwells on the idea of gore pouring from a carcate

The glaze covering my eyes (for in my mental rampancies

I have been seeing nothing) dissolves away, and I find myself stating at one of my "visions" in material form My neck has been slathered in rich splashes of red

My neck has been slathered in rich splashes of red After all it is a "cut throat" every morning I forget that mole

We are moving up the unwarmed harbour of New Yorkcreeping slowly towards Manhattan Island as a biting wind crosses the decks

I have a telegram from Ene in 173 pocket which was delivered to me soon after we left "quarantine". It \$235

"Regret cannot meet you, phone me Barchy Motel"

I climb to "A" deck, with my table friend the doctor, to be shown the New York he knows More disappointment

The harbour shores have not the beauty of those that I have

seen at, for instance, Sydney, Australia-

At the moment my impressions are of open country and of bungalows-the type found on any holiday "lakeside" in any part of the world

Eventually as we proceed nearer to the Statue of Liberty-

the scenes change

Yet the side which I am told is "New Jersey" looks unexciting from the middle of the harbour-like uninteresting parts of Glasgow or the Tyneside---

'Brooklyn" seems slightly better-yet still I am unimpressed I am afraid that I expected more than I have found, after all that I had heard of New York Harbour

But ahead stand those skyscrapers-as we have seen them on the movies Yet in a way different, for here they have depth

A hum of industry appears to engulf these slender giantsbig intangible things seem to be happening out of sight amid their chasms

I am surprised that there are so few skyscrapers-Yes, so few, for there appears to be only a small cluster of them

Is it correct then, that the average height of Paris is greater than New York City?

We are abreast of the Statue of Liberty now I feel appropriztely impressed The doctor buoys my awe with facts and figures

He tells me that the torch of this colossal female figure towers three hundred feet into the air-that the statue itself weighs one hundred tons-that the cost was one hundred and twenty thousand pounds I learn that it is the work of a French sculptor, Frederic Bartholdi, and that it was completed in 1883 as a suitable gift to commemorate the 'long-established good will ' between France and America

He says "Bedloes" when I ask him the name of the island on which it stands, and adds that the statue is even much higher than was the Colossus of "Rhodes"

A staircase in the monument makes it possible to reach the torch at the extreme height of the extended arm. The torch

balcony can accommodate fifteen people Above this balcony is an electric light which illuminates the torch at night

But by now we have passed it—we are so much closer to these man made castles that form Lower Manhatta that the mind is bewildered by any attempt to grasp the real size of those gigantic towers—the smallest of them housing a population of a reasonably sized town—

As we make our way to the top deck I am told that apart from the Eisel Tower there is nothing in the old world to compare with them

I mentally contradict my informant, thinking of the pride of Llublijana, Jugoslavia

However, I gather that forty of these "skyscrapers" are higher than the Great Pyramid and that two of them rise over one thousand for

The "more recent" towers pointed out to me are graceful in outline, but it is their height that stuns the imagination. And they look so firm that they seem to have been constructed to Ruskin?

# " let us think that we build for ever "

I am to learn in time that the skyscraper is not an American eccentricity or the result of a desire to no one better

It is a logical solution to the question of economizing on space in a commercial city with a huge daytime population.

space in a commercial city with a huge daytime population New York is incapable of lateral expansion. These buildings are the intelligent result. They tower aggressively above us as we move up the western side of

Manhattan Island
"Is that the Empire State'?" I ask, pointing to one that
seems to rise above the others

I am told that it's the "Cities Service Building" and that the other omnous tower beside it is "International Telephones"

In turn the more important ones are pointed out to me—I am told that a little green strip at the foot of them all is Battery Park. That the little island away to their right is Governor's Island—star of the Brussh Resudency when New York was

under our flag. But I still bayen't seen the much advertised 'Empire State Building'

"You'll have to wait until we get further up-river."

And we creen up the Hudson, leaving the famous (and-to some—"infamous") cluster to recede on our starboard side.

The forward lounge appears to have become a circus,

Chairs have been placed in lines so as to form not one aisle but several, alphabetically segregated.

Seated at tables facing these aisles are hard-boiled immigration officials

It is like a game.

Armed with your visaed passport, you sit as near as possible to the scaffold in the line which represents your section of the alphabet.

Then, as each victim vacates his or her chair and moves grimly forward on that lone journey to face the fire of American officialdom, the line resembles an incoming wave, as each sitter realizes individually that he or she must "move up one".

Finally it is my turn to leave the line, and I walk forward to

be cross-questioned.

Although I expect to stay only two days before again sailing, I have taken special care to provide myself with a visitor's visa (valid for twelve months' stay).

But the immigration official takes even greater care to mark

me as a "Transit" case.

"So you're going South-okay, we'll give you fifteen days in America."

When "all the smoke has cleared away" I wander out on to the deck and look down at the "dock" into which we are edging broadside.

The sun is now concentrating its ten o'clock intensity—the water looks green, the metal dome at the top of the towering "Empire State" is a ball of fire.

Yes, it is going to be a good day.

All sorts of faces-mostly "Panama-hatted"-state and shout to us from the wharf.

"Hey, you old 'so-and-so', come down from there----"

"Welcome to Americal"

Whole family intimacies flit from ship to shore

"I said Vergie and Elmer-it's canned-finished-done-"

"The second in nineteen months

"Poisonal appearances from here to the coast—Johnnie says it's in the bag—but Herman wants it signed——"

says it's in the bag—but Herman wants it signed——"
In the warmth of the New York day I stay idly pondering

over the animations of these people fifty feet below us
This is the American scene I tell myself—it must be—it

I wonder ungallantly how many English girls I have seen

with the careless sparkle of little Miss White Shoes, who is bantering with a companion as they wait, on the wharf, for the gangway to be lowered

How many Englishmen have I seen with that "Let me-given you a really big hand' demeanour. Or that hearty 'Wall Street and three million square miles behind me" largeness which seems to direct the manner of these people on the wharf

It is not difficult to sense the "God spare-me-from-that" thoughts of some sons of England kind enough to concentrate on this narrative. But, as far as I am concerned, from the little experience I have had of them, Americans are—to use their own vocabulary—'grand' Yes, "grand , meaning byg—fine—immense—immense in their gestures—immense with their gratitude—immense in all matters pertaining to hospitality, courtest, and their own projects

And, leaning over the promenade "rail", I wonder now whether I shall encounter many exceptions to these preliminary conceptions I consider that I am going to like this great English-speaking nation on which I am gazing for the first time. Already, as the result of cooversations with the few people whom I have met "on board", the need for a much better understanding of the United States by England strikes me forcibly.

I like this lick-of repression or freedom-of-expressionuntempered by restraint which appears to emanate from Americans Just listen to one of them in the process of thanking somebody for something. In the majority of cases there is a sincerity behind the way in which he or she does it, which is refreshing in its genuineness. I have learnt their word for this verbal tincture. They call it "mmph"!

The first part of my journey is over and I am soon to meet the "Expedition". The Manhattan has come to rest with her stern towards New Jersey.

Her bows are pointing in towards "the Island".

"When your dinner-shirts have been heaved into the mudwhen every decent suit you possess and most of your luggage has been dog-cared and crumpled—at least then you'll have a prejudice or two——"

In this way my dealings with the New York Customs have been forecast by one of those nothing-outside-England specimens, who unfortunately abound in our little corner of the world.

"I know," he has assured me, "Albert went across once---"

So that as I hunt for the correct alphabetical section which will mark the whereabouts of my luggage, I mentally prepare myself to meet such a situation.

A printed form—presented to all passengers, whilst at sea—has made it clear that before the New York Custome zenination can take place, each passenger should locate his luggage in the "shed" and segregate it from that of other passengers. He or she is then to call the attention of one of the many inspectors at the bureau and "normal customs examination will follow".

I am surprised to find that normal customs examination does follow—that instead of my starched shirts taking a short and snappy journey from the comfortable interior of my cabin trunk to an undignified sprawl in the dust of the wharf, they are carefully lifted and replaced. In any case the official prefers me to do the lifting.

I find myself thinking that possibly hand in glove with the American conception of "freedom", a "tooth-for-a-tooth" is, perhaps, not a totally ignored adage, especially when the "f-say-my-man-m" specimens refuse to consider seriously any other officialdom than that of their own country. I note in one case

that too much of what I call "Englishness" has brought one Customs hawk down heavily on a victim

But, as far as my own "examination" is concerned, things run smoothly My luggage is put through quickly and with no watting

A be-whiskered "Old Bill" shirt sleeved, slouch-capped, porter soon has my trunk on a trolley and I dog his footsteps until we have reached a descending escalator

"This," he tells me, wiping his stained fungus with a leg-ofmutton palm, "is as far as I go-"

### CHAPTER TV

"'PHONE? In the bookstall kiosk," grunted the hirsute custodian of my luggage, with another push at his tobacco-juiced luxuriance.

"No," he added, "I can't wait by your trunk. . . ."
But for a little extra he did, and I tracked down the 'phone.

The telephone systems of the world don't differ very much in principle, but those in New York exercised my brain. There was no button "A" or button "B". The dial-numbers were in the order of two letters and five figures, instead of our own of three letters and four figures. This was straightforward, but after a series of experiments in which I fed an instrument with a glut of loose change, I discovered that following "failure to connect", it was necessary to hang up the receiver and wait for the coin to automatically clink back into the recovery scoop. A nickel was the charge for a local call and eventually I was through to the Barclay Hotel—

"Right—come along," Eric concluded, "we're at fortyninth and Lexington—very busy—we've very little time—"

So I rejoined my walrus friend and when he had slung my trunk on to the descending escalator and I had tipped him, we parted, and I followed my possessions to a lower level.

Although "luxury cabs" haunt New York, there was a very poor display of wheeled scrap-metal at the bottom of the secalator. Some of it, which in England would have barely fetched five pounds per car, was taking on passengers and luggage and snorting up ramps. These ramps were so steep and each cab was so dependent on the next one moving forward that I thought at once about loose distributor leads and weak axles. But this morbid meditation was dispersed by a husky-looking docker balancing my trunk on his shoulder in a

manner suggesting that the heavy contents had been left elsewhere

"Hallo, Mr Loch, what weather in the Old Country?"

Already a friend He listened with apparent interest as I

skimmed around the recent English temperatures and periods of sunshine

"Boy, have we had hot nights," he exchanged, "N'York's bin sleepin' on the roof—this cab will take you——"

I climbed into the quivering "ex yellow" monster and a couple of bullock teams under the bonnet heaved the contraption up the ramp

Or perhaps they were greybounds I sat in the middle of that dusty upholistered "cage" wondering if worse things really did happen at sea or on the streets of Paris Once in an English fog, a couple of thousand feet above the ground, a sizeable shadow had fished under my nose. I had only just learnt to tinker effectively with the controls of the snorting thing in which I sat, and that shadow had produced a similar sensation in my stomach to the one which I now experienced

This New York shirt sleeved driver meant business and appeared to be unconcerned with the question of wear and tear However, as I attempted to philosophically reflect, this was America. And according to the Old World that word was

synonymous with "hustle"

There came a time when buildings ceased to bend at angles and eventually someone opened a door allowing me to plump to the pavement of the Barcky Hotel. In future, I decided, I should stack to roundabouts or quiet lattle aeroplaines it hunt me to actually pay money for this distress but, as I handed a 'greenback' to the dirver, such barely relevant thinking was banished by a black "Ford" roshing at the hotel with a brakelining squeal. Four young men poured from the front seat, disclosing a rear compartment piled high with boxes. They lost no time in fishing these out, whist one of them

looked up and down the street and then rushed into the Burelay

'Hold it—we don't want a hole blown in the side walk—"
"I said, we need at least one thousand of forty five

AND A HEAD OF THIRTY THREE SPECIAL, AND WE NEED IT

"And how did he take it?"

"He slid me five thousand of each "

Car-occupant number four burst out through the door-way with a set expression——

"Fellers we've got to work fast . . ."

I flung my powers of recollection after the names of American public enemies in whom Fleet Street had shown an interest over the past few years. But the hospitality of my receptive imagination was checked as three uniformed hotel porters bounded out "The bell hops will fix 'em—now fellers be careful—those go straight up to the Expedition—..."

Eric was chatting in a foyer lounge chair I recognized him at once although we had never met previously From intermittent correspondence extending over a period of years I had a fair idea of the fellow I was to see

He also showed immediate recognition-

"Alasdair? By God!" was his greeting.

Then in practically the same breath he rattled off facts and figures, outlining the part I should play in the expedition and the extra equipment which I should acquire at once.

"So much to do "he murmured, unconsciously quoting Rhodes' alleged last words——

In a suite upstairs, it appeared, where things seemed craziest, I should meet the other members of the expedition So I left Eric to his interview and sought this "Marx Brother" section of the hotel

But what I actually found was a well-organized example of how to do something in a hurry. There were "members" painting, there were friends hammering lids, reporters were clinking ice in glasses, a 'phone rang twice as I stood in the doorway watching. In the room beyond there were more voices and another 'phone rang. It suggested a carpentry lesson at a cocktail party.

"Mark that one, too "

"Yes, two thousand with twenty four inch blades . ."
"Sure—the concentrated vegetable is numbered and

 they will not be looking for Colonel Fawcett—their activities will be centred on the other side of South America."

"Are the camp beds here? Then why not? I told that—"
"Machine guns? No, I'm afraid not—hope it won't be that
kind of an expedition The collabsible boat is already at the

docks, along with the out board engines"

Perhaps Enc was tight when he spoke of a Marx Brother atmosphere. The only place where I have seen anything to parallel the disturbed intentor of that suite, was in a film studio. Over a hundred cases stretched around the walls, one upon the other. Saws, anals and pieces of rope key about on the floor as if to trap the restless community who wended their intricate way among people welding hatmenes and paint

And all this was taking place in what the press would call a

"luxury hotel"

Soon after I had introduced myself to the circus upstairs Enc appeared again. He had barely time to fling a 'Good—so you've met them all," at me, before passing into the next room to an alarmist telephone. It was another eight hours before I had a chat with him

The Special Correspondent for the London Sunday Express observed of Etre that he was "packing in an hotel room, col locting scores of tubes of tooth paste, packages of cereals, razor blades, and a "mulitude" of other things they will be unable to obtain in the wild land of the lost Incas "

The Correspondent added that Eric 'grabbed a parcel containing scores of long thin knives, and put them in a

packing case"

"These are machetes," Enc was quoted as having said, 
"they use them in South America for everything from cutting bananas to killing. I'm taking them as gifts for the
natives."

His alleged comments on the treasure interests of the

expedition were published as follows

"The rise and fall of the Incan civilization is one of the greatest dramas of the world. If we could shed more light on it, we could show the world a new page in its history."

"High in the mountains above the wild parts of Ecuador

there lies a lake that only two white men have seen. That is our main quarry

"Beneath the waters of that lake one of the world's greatest secrets, the lost treasure of the Incas, has remained hidden for more than four hundred years

"If legends are right, that lake is littered with enough gold to alter the entire financial system of the present day world

"Incas brought the gold there and sank it to keep it from the grasp of the Spanish conquistador Pizarro, who, with one hundred and eighty nine soldiers, destroyed the empire of twelve million people, in his greed for gold to replenish the empire of first of Spani

"One of the two white men who saw the lake was a Spaniard named Valverde, who died at Seville at the end of the sixteenth century and left a secret document describing the route

"In 1912 Captain C E Brooks, an American, managed to

reach the lake through the help of three Indian guides
"He saw on the opposite side of the lake a vague-looking

structure, which seemed to be like the porch of a church
"He hastened to cross the lake to reach this but a cloud-

burst held him back
"His Indians fled, and Brooks had a hard fight to return to

civilization alive
"Brooks died in New York several years later, but he told a

friend about the lake

there "

"That friend told me
"We shall take the same path trodden by Valverde more than
three hundred years ago It is a dangerous journey round the
side of a precipitous mountain, but it is the easiest way to get

My forty-eight hours in Manhattan slipped quickly by

Apart from the little matters of equipment, of instruments, of visas, of the bank, and many (unnecessary) etecteras at the advice of the very well meaning, there was the business of seeing New York

After a great deal of "Ford V-Eighting" about a very hot, and (at the time) dirty, yet amazing Manhattan, I found myself

squatting on my heels in the Barclay Hotel, armed with a brush dripping selignum

Spectators and well wishers seemed to have thinned out fairly well—there were perhaps five or six people wandering in and out of the doorway—and a certain amount of conversation taking place in a room beyond

Then suddenly at my ear

"Why spend your first evening in New York like this?"
"Any suggestions?" I asked this very attractive part of the

organization

"Plenty Let's start with the Empire State—we can walk it "
"Not a restaurant?" I queried, my mind on all that I had
heard of Broadway "Dispers"

"Why-no restaurants in Europe?" was the retort

"Come along, little boy-you're going to see New York-"

Fifth Avenue, bordered by its mighty buildings is so dwarfed that it is almost a trench. And the "Empire State" ness above it all to a height of one thousand two hundred and fifty feet and occupies the site of the old Waldorf Astona Hotel at the corner of 34th Street. Incidentally the now gunt Waldorf Astona is just around the corner from the Barclay Hotel

We walked through the numerous ground floor halls of the "Empire State"—each one seemingly being bounded by rows of "clevation"—express lifts—to carry passengers non stop to different floors of the building

At a counter, heaped with souvenirs and post cards of the building, we bought tickets for the journey to the top at six shillings apiece

A young military academy student in uniform had led his parents to the counter before we reached it

"We're from Montana," he offered to the girl selling the tickets, "how many floors do we shoot for the top?"

"The-Empire State-Building is-one-hundred and-twofloors high," the girl quoted mechanically "Above-theobservation tower they-are-experimenting with-television"

"Ge-e-ee," the youth replied, goggle-eyed, "ya hear that

There are sixty one passenger lifts in the "Empire State" and six for baggage

As far as I can remember the first one took us up about

sixty-eight stories non stop

Then disembarking we caught another to the "eighty sixth floor" Here we found a café, another souvenir counter and guides to show us round the rectangular parapet. This was one thousand and forty five feet high—just one foot less in height than the "Chrysler" building

Knowing that we could go higher we didn't stay, but caught another lift to the "hundred and second floor" and stepped

into the circular glassed observation room

New York from this vantage point at any time of the year—day or night—is impressive

Unless there is cloud or fog about, the whole of the island is

To see Times Square—New York's "Piccadilly Circus"—flashing its coloured signs so far away—so very far below, immediately reminds you of a nocturnal air tip But that this point in the sky, from which you are gazing down upon New York City, is actually connected with it all, is a fact that you can only resignedly accept as being so, though the mind finds it almost impossible to grasp

Manhattan—with the exception of snake-like Broadway, the Bowery and other curvatures, has most of its avenues running north and south, and its streets directed east and west These avenues and streets are numbered so that any newcomer realizing the numerical order has little chance of losing his way

Although Broadway curves a great deal, it runs the whole length of the island, more-or less north and south—the low numbered streets commence at the most southerly part of the island so that a theatre advertised as being "at Broadway and 4 and Street" or the number of a building, at for instance, W 36th Street, is easily found

From the observation tower New York City was outlined in

lights as an illuminated map
As we looked northwards towards a large, comparatively
unlighted rectangular strip, two-thirds of the way up the island,
I was told that it was Central Park

"And that will be Park Avenue bordering it on the right," I suggested

I suggested
"No, Fifth Avenue, and on Fifth Avenue's right Madison—

then Fark."
"Those are New York's three main avenues," I was informed

Then again whilst still looking northwards "That's 'darkie' Hatlem—White Plains to the left "

Walking to the other side of the Observation Room the maze of illuminated towers pleased us, it was like the glow of some stilled gigantic farground "Stilled" for at this height above the city we could hear nothing, not even Fifth Avenue traffic

Down harbour we could see the light of the Statue of Liberty

Then moving around the circular room—"There's Greenwich Village, our artists congregate there"

"Oh, like London's Chelsea "

"Yes, I've heard so, but we have our Chelsea also Look! it's that section down by Greenwich, to the left "

"This building (it was fourteen streets away, yet at this height we seemed to overlang it) is the R C A —main tower of the Rockefeller Centre

"Those illuminated roof gardens are seventy floors high, and they take ninety six thousand gallons of water every day"

"Ninety-six thousand? How could they use that amount?"
"Waterfalls, streams, fountains and the watering system
They call it all the 'Gardens of Nations' and the blooms come
from European countries and even Japan"

"What is 'R.C.A '? What do the letters represent?"

"Radio Corporation of America—headquarters of the "NBC."

And then I remembered my short wave radio reception of America, over in England, and the familiar words of the announcer "This is the Red Network of the National Broad casting Company, R C.A. Building, Radio Cit, New York..."

"What else is there in the Rockefeller Centre that I might see sometime?"

"Center Theatre . . . biggest in the world—oh, and the Rainbow Room on the sixty-fifth . . ."

It appeared that the Rainbow Room was a two-story high dining and dancing establishment with a revolving dancefloor, twenty-seven feet in diameter, and a "colour organ".

"A what?"

"A colour organ-automatically converts vocal, instrumental, or organ music into appropriate colour harmonies."

"How do you know all these things?"

"My city—and I'm a journalist. We have to know-We must have stayed an hour just looking down at New York.

My friend claimed that we had "only just begun", but my time was limited. There was still work to be done at the hotel.

She had been right. I appreciated New York more fully from the top of the "Empire State" than I might have from the interior of a gilded "speak". Yes, I heard one of the nightclubs still referred to in this way, even though prohibition has been abolished several years.

As we walked back through the warm streets, to the Barclay Hotel, I was surprised to notice that apart from such things as the higher buildings of this metropolis, there was a great deal of similarity between London and New York. And despite the insinuations of the English 'critics', Americans seemed just as ordinary and as orderly as we like to consider ourselves.

In the middle of the cañons of the city, we passed a small 'colonial' weatherboard cottage, completely painted in white. It seemed strange to see it sitting at the foot of this towering

masonry. Obviously it had never been occupied.

I was told that it was a "sample". This, to me, was salesmanship.

Street hawkers 'displayed' in much the same way as our own. But it interested me to frequently pass tripod-mounted telescopes on the pavement. Stellar observations at a nickel a time. Or you could "watch Senator So-and-so on the thirtyseventh floor . . ."

A newspaper-seller at my elbow addressed nobody in particular.

"I can give you a lovely suicide," he hollered, against a cupped palm. "Happened right in the heart of the city . . . can't miss . . ."

#### CHAPTER V

ON the following morning I was walking with one of the expedition across Battery Park at the "foot" of Manhattan Island

One of the men lying on his back in the grass got up and asked me for a ciparette. I gave him four or five

"Say—thanks"

He asked for nothing more A bloodstained rag decorated his head. One arm was in a dirty sling and one side of his face had taken a fair amount of punishment

"A beat up," commented Mont, who was to be a doctor as well as geologist to the expedition

After an hour or two back at "headquarters" Heft the others, still juggling with paint and cases, to explore a little of New York on my own.

The City's underground tube ratiway was not impressive For one reason or another I had expected better of New York For cleanliness the system was not comparable to that of London, Sydney or even Paris The "Overhead' trains were an eye-sore, although I believe that Suth Avenue has just done something about this They clattered and rattled but did not seem to attun very high steeds

For a long time I had wanted to see Floyd Bennett Airfield The hotel barber had advised catching the subway "to Flat-

bush, Brooklyn and ask again."

So at the 42nd Street terminal, above which towers the building of Grand Central, allegedly the "finest station in the world', I dropped a nickel (twopence ha'penny) into a turnstile slot and shot away towards Flatbush.

Yet I ended up at Coney Island

There on the railway plan, branching away from Flatbush, had been a line leading to Coney Island, all that I had ever heard of this extraordinary Margate cum Blackpool suddenly flooded my capricious mind to temporarily eclipse any thought of "Floyd Bennett" and I just sat tight to see what exactly lay ahead

## And here it was

A wide board walk stretched along the Coney Island beaches which were mysteriously divided off into sections of probably a hundred yards per strip. For extremist students of anatomy this watering place should be a Mecca. A great per centage of the bathers were Jewish and negro. The glare was terrific, the sand dirty, and the converging mass of human meat offered newcomers little encouragement. Not even a small cat could have been swung amongst that aquatic congregation.

I bought some coloured glasses, but they were so bad that the eye strain lessened when I discarded them I tried other pairs But they were all cheap and hard on the eyes

It has never been easy for me to outgrow my sneaking weak ness for mermad sideshows, tents with two-headed hippos or knosks with snake-girls And now as I stood, victim to a pineapple juice stall beneath one of the many towering monsters of twisted iron, my eye caught a roller coaster in action I learnt that the precipitous railway, on which the lightning streak had flashed itself for an instant was THE CYCLONE.

"Be scared to death we kill you for a dime annety feet vertical drop "

The patter at least was frank about it

A "joy car" waited by the low wooden platform with already one or two apprehensive passengers biting their nails in the front seats

The hand on that wooden lever began it all With nothing less than a rush we swooped amidst the steel maze and very slowly climbed the metal 'ladder' to—well, I was not very certain what the immediate future had to offer This form of recreation had never previously ventured my way but I expected it would be all right.

It was pleasant moving so high above Coney Island and to be able to enjoy it all from the comfort of this open "car" I sat back, spread my legs and stretched in the sunshine that seemed to concentrate on the peak of this steel hill Well, we had reached the top What exactly was to happen now? Could this doubtful sort of amusement offer anything unobtainable on a subway ride?

There was that restful moment when we were practically at a standstill high up on the pinnacle of this over-and-down bend in the rails. In the soothing sun I yawned sleepily I realized now that a good sunbake on the beach would have represented a more reasonable way of spending the morning. Well, anyhow, this nonsense was soon to be over

But, as I sat basking in those warm rays and looking out to sea, I wondered whether that iced fruit drink should have been swallowed so quickly

Have you ever been thrown over a cliff in a barrel? I have heard of such a thing happening at Niagara Falls But have jou experienced it, or the same effect?

If that "car' had solely relied upon gravity to hurl itself down that "ninety feet' mass, perhaps---

But, this being the age of high powered electric machinery, anything was liable to happen. And of course it did. With complete unanalytical disregard that barriel bumped its way down the never-ending cliff, over and over, bouncing suddenly at right angles from rocks, or so it seemed. Splendid reasons for me to kick myself tumbled over and over beside post mortems on that late cray fish supper.

Then after an eternity of hour upon hour unreality I came out from behind the spotted darkness of my cyclids and found that the barrel had come to rest. And that it was not a barrel but a switchback car.

A notice hanging above the termination of this nightmare invited a repetition of it all I gazed blearly at it, and flopped hurriedly from the "car"

Half an hour later above Floyd Bennett Airfield I took over the controls of a 'dualled' Stinson cabin monoplane. As well as the regular pilot beside me, there were two 'first flighters' in the back

The wings and nose of the machine were swaying very unsoberly in response to my manipulation of the controls. It was like riding on a camel

"First time I've flown a machine with wheel-controlled ailerons," I protested half-heartedly.

"Seems like we was riding a roller-coaster," returned the dubious fellow beside me.

"Well, how does she handle?" asked a mechanic cheerfully, as I sheepishly left the plane. Meanwhile two very pallid passengers crawled out behind me and walked away wordless. There was some satisfaction in knowing that other stomachs

had curdled that morning.

On the Fifth Avenue bus, which was a double-decket with an open roof, the fares were collected by a conductor who came around with a small hand instrument, the size of an average camera, into which you fed a dime. On the Sixth Avenue buses your fare is a nickel.

For a quick meal the drug stores were always handy with their "sure-fire service counter" as I heard one of the whitecapped and aproned attendants refer to his snack-bar. And it is

"sure-fire".

Before you have settled on to a stool, a glass of iced soda water is plumped on the counter. The order, which can vary from doughnuts and coffee to a full-sized meal, is received and executed as if the life of the attendant depends on immediate "delivery of the goods". With the executed order comes a ticket "punched" against the amount due to the cash desk on your way out. In short the whole idea of the American lunchcounter is to "save your time".

After lunch I found myself nearing the Barclay again, and

alongside the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel.

Its predecessor—the "old Waldorf"—which once occupied the site of the Empire State Building, was history to the Americans and for thirty-five years one of their finest hotels.

And here was the new version I found it buzzing and palatial—an inflated version of my

conception of a big hotel.

At the cocktail bar I thought of Huey Long, the Louisiana 'dictator'. Yesterday, according to the Press, this cheery Senator had gathered a convivial group here and had mixed

them a 'julep' the Southern way amidst cries of "Shake it, Hueyl" "Give it that Dixie m m mph!" "Take it to Town, boyl"

And to-day he was said to have charged in the U.S. Senate that his death had been plotted at a secret meeting in New Orleans.

Yes, despite the genial "party" at this cocktail bar, he had his enemies, as the Louisiana lady passenger of the S S Manbattan had intimated

On September 8th, whilst I was in Ecuador, Senator Huey P ("Kingfish") Long was shot at Baton Rouge, Louisiana, by Dr Carl Wess, aged twenty nine years, who was in turn slain by the State police The assassin was son in law to a leader of the anti Long faction

Long was shot as he walked from the Chamber of the Louisiana House of Representatives where he had been directing the passage of bills aimed to strengthen his grip on the policies of the State and to fight the New Deal and Roosevelt policies.

He died on September 10th

In the body of Weiss were found sixty-one bullet holes Senator Long was buried in the new plaza of the State capitol at Baton Rouge A coroner's jury found on September 16th that Dr Weiss' wounds were "homicalally inflicted"

"You haven't had your teeth into very much of the Town," observed a member of the expedition, that evening

"There seems to have been a lot to do," I commented, "and I've a regiment of trunk lids—"

'Torget the lids-carry them aboard as they are-"

"And these boxes," I pointed to a part of the suite categorized usually as a "private drawing room", but now resembling the basement of a warehouse "How can they possibly teach the Jesta Barbara by sailing time to-morrow?"

"Somebody's contracted to do it, so why should you care? Come on, this town's just waiting to be torn spart—"

Five minutes lat r some of the boxes were already attraining out through the door

So I went.

If the "town" was torn apart, it was done unobtrusively

Yet the following morning I should have found it difficult to

suggest that I had seen nothing of New York

Beginning with clam chowder in a Greenwich Village cray fish bar, followed by an introduction to Jack Dempsey's Restaurant, cafés of varied nationalities came and went, inter spersed with some extraordinary taxicab rides "Minimum speed here is forty," I was told This, of course, was only in certain sections of the city

I don't know whether you've ever engaged the open horsedrawn landau which waits all night for fares, usually at the southern end of Central Park

"How much right around?" three of us asked the whiskered

top hatted cabby as we patted the bored horse
At a settled price of four dollars fifty cents the four wheeler

set off to encircle the Park just as the dawn was breaking
Occasional strains of dance music came from the illuminated
hotel roof tops and pent houses, bordering the Park

The horse seemed relieved for some break in the monotony. The cabby seemed indifferent to the fact that this slow jog through the surprisingly well kept gardens was to mean an additional eighteen shillings to his pocket

The atmosphere had more than a nip as we dawdled past little lakes and well groomed hedges. The fact that the City was just awaking—the crispness of the dewy air and the comparative silence of this zero hour—coupled with this peaceful mode of transport, gave me something more than that spring chicken feeling. Although I had always known that there had been a 'twin' to our Cleopatra's Needle on the Thanes Embankment—it surprised me to find it in Central Park.

The very charming girl sitting between Jan and myself moved forward until she was half kneeling on the seat behind the cabby

"What a nice old horse-what's its name?"

No answer

"I said what is the name of your horse"

No reply

She turned to us

"I think he's dead "

She leant further over to look at his face

"He's asleep " "Well, wake him "

"I don't like to "

"He's not earning his four fifty if he's sleeping"

"All right" She gave him an imperceptible dig "Hey, there, sleepy, what's your horse's name?"

?" Then after some thought "Mary " "So's mine-shake"

"Huh?"

"Shake-my name's Mary"

She took one of his hands when he made no effort to comply "Does Mary eat much?" asked the other Mary

"Like uh horse," was the reply "Oh!"

"Well, you had it coming to you-"

Mary sat back between us laughing The trip took an hour It had been a tonic for us, but the

horse was yawning "Better than sleep," we agreed as we stepped down to think

about breakfast

Then I remembered my unconquered trunks That I was sailing for Ecuador in five hours' time-

With two anticipatory "bell hops" as pall bearers, my newlyacquired trunk ("genu-eyne steel-three fifty quick") was marched to the edge of the kerb, the un Venus like "duffle" was flung diffidently into the cab, and I murmured "S S Santa Barbara-Brooklyn," feeling that now it had begun

But it hadn't-at least not yet I put it to the driver that I wanted to buy a Spanish English dictionary, and to ask about a book on Ecuador This business took time

After the first stop I had acquired a pocket Collins, but after three "starts" was still without the other "Ecuador?" the woman in the last small shop had begun "Where---?"

The Brooklyn Bridge

As we drove over it, I thought of the film The Bowery, and of

George Raft's "high dive" from the spanning structure for a

The dockland streets that I drove through were like those of many world ports-untidy, unthought of, a cupboard skeleton that a city championing cleanliness chose to forget

The Santa Barbara's orchestra, wrapt in what must have been one of its more animated dervishes, was conscientiously creating a Latin atmosphere as I stepped aboard from the Brooklyn pier

When the blast of that high powered rumba first pervaded my spinal system, my mind digressed and detected abstract South American smells

Strange spices-it assured me-permeated the decks on which I trod

A large basket of hot house flowers, stood shaded by a door opposite the gangway

A la Señora-

Passajera boque de vapor 'Santa Barbara', Brooklyn, Nueva York, E E U U'

"Enviamos todos nos amos " the attached card began You are right, my curiosity was rampant, but at the time my knowledge of the language was at a minimum Yet my imagination caught at the fact that it was Spanish and sped

away at a tangent on geographically coloured wings

Ever since my arrival in New York, I had been gradually absorbing, or at least feeling that I was absorbing, the spirit of South America And now it amused me to think that, within an hour, I should be "rolling down" to-well. I still wasn't quite sure what, but my confused British mind toved with a phantasm of bull fights, Mexican hats, olive skins, and-of course—the mevitable dusky-eyed señoritas

And nobody had yet produced any disillusioning evidence that this Latin mecca was other than as I was imagining it

On the contrary

A hovering reporter sprayed me with dramatisms, concerning our Ecuadorian programme, querying whether I should carry one revolver or two

I explained that I always missed anyway, and that two ighty revolvers would not assist mountain climbing or ims from Upper Amazon crocs There actually was a time. wever, when I did eventually carry two

Looking at the cabin number I decided that it certainly was one that I had been allotted for the voyage, despite the fact at it was already occupied. The sounds that were coming rough the door paralleled those that I expected to hear in the uadorian jungles, so I thought that I might as well investi te.

" . . Who?" "Alasdair Loch."

"Ho-come on in

I found myself in the thick of a very convivial meeting Further entrances brought to my mind that 'mushroom' aze which swept across the Atlantic to England-

Knockt Knockt

"Who is it----?"

"Jenkinsl'

"Ienkins who?"

"Ienkins of the ---- Herald" "Come on in."

Then again-

"New York Times"

"Come in "

Sardines must feel just a little bored after a month of it, I effected, but it's very pleasant ("dash more soda, Jan1") to elebrate a ship's departure-

An abridgement of one of the articles published by the Ver York Times on the day we sailed runs as follows

TO FIND WILD MEN

PROPERTY OF STANCES ANAZON VALLET FOR LITTLE KNOWN SSABELA INDIANS

A TRIBE OF PIGHTERS

THEIR TERRITORY HAS NEVER BEEN PENETRATED REPORT BY WHITE MEN

"When the Grace liner Santa Barbara sails from New York to-day, for Guayaquil, Ecuador, it will carry among its passengers leader of the Andes Amazon Expedition and four of his aides. The purpose of the expedition is to establish contact with the Sabela Indians Records fail to show that white men ever trood the tribes' territory in the Upper Amazon Valley, somewhere between the Napo and Curaray Rivers.

"The captain and his aides, who will be joined in Guayaquil by five additional members of the party, said that they planned to travel by mountain railway, motor truck, mule, pack extract, rafts and Indian canoes They will cross the perpetual snow-line of the Andes and finally reach the Amazon Valley, where the real work of the expedition will begin

"Despite their invisibility the Indians will be nearly hidden behind natural screens, watching avidly every movement of the expedition

'When a hut is found a member of the expedition will leave

a gift at its entrance
"When the gift has been taken away by the Indians the party
member will return with another gift Finally, after two or

three weeks, the explorers will appear outside the hut, dis playing their gifts openly

'The expedition will also attempt to locate a lake between the peaks of the mountain Certo Hermoso, where, according to legend, the lineas buned a vast treasure about four hundred years ago. The group will also chart territory over which they pass, accure fossils and samples of mineral deposits, zoological specimens and other items of scientific interest."

But the Grace liner, Santa Barbara, sailing on that day for Ecuador did not carry among its passengers the leader of the Andes Amazon Expedition

Eric decided at the last minute that he had sufficient business to attend to in New York to warrant another week's stay

So he cancelled his booking, unofficially

Having fixed the date of departure for the expedition several months beforehand, he had little intention of allowing reporters to attach any adverse criticism to the necessary post-

### I LEFT ENGLAND

ponement of his personal sailing date. So he decided in announce it to those press men on board

'News hawks' as they are termed, in America, are known for their habits of lingering and pier jumping :

steamers So that after the expedition had been grouped, filmed interviewed on the top deck against the distant Manh: skyline, it amused me to see Eric outlining his plans in

bowels of the ship, some time after the "All ashore" sirer How he managed to slip back to the pier without being s I failed to discover, and I asked him some months afterw if he had been spotted by any of these reporters "Very nearly by one," was his reply, "but I dodged bel

a pıllar

Which amused me again, for the idea of Eric hiding f anybody had its lighter side

## CHAPTER VI

"THAT crazy city," muttered Jan, who had come to see us off, as across the water New York—a gawky New York from this angle—bathed and glinted in the burning sunshine

Fifteen minutes later we were ploughing away from it— South America bound

south America bound

As the Santa Barbara trailed torn paper streamers untidily past Bedloes Island, I asked a fellow deck rail idler for more facts concerning its Statue of Liberty

"How ? I began

"Set up there in 1886 Took time Sixty Froggies worked on it for ten years They certainly did a wonderful job A sculptor guy, Bartholdi, fixed a life size model first, then he enlarged it four times—maybe five"

"Certainly more than four or five"

"Sure, but his method was to sectionally divide the model first, then to multiply the measurements of each piece, stretched thin copper across those enlarged sections, then built them to a smaller edition of our lady up there"

"As a check before casting the larger figure, I suppose?"

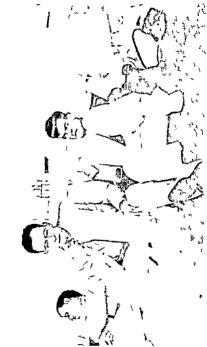
"Yep—after this check up, he let himself go Did it in plaster, took wooden moulds. This time beat heavier copper over the wood. I believe they strengthened those pieces with insulated from."

"The measurements must have been precise to risk enlarging an error"

"Measurements—they say there were nine thousand taken Sure, the job was precise"

"And then when the time came to fit this jig saw together?"
"Ran an iron frame up in Paris Sure the whole thing was
done in France Each section of 'Liberty' was bolted inside the
frame, until they had her as you see her?"

"What a cargo to ship across the Atlantic "



"Yep, but again in sections The lady came in wooden cases Set her up piece by piece on that pedestal—certainly—and the pedestal is sixty five feet high But the head had been exhibited over here before——"

"I can see at least three expressions on her face "

"Yeah Bet she's smiling right back at us Americans and our Liberty Knows we've gotten more than we can use"

"Staffed with women and Chinks"

My London Southampton train friend from the other Santa Barbara had not expressed himself well

American stewardesses dressed neatly and with colour made each meal a bright event in the day

States born Chinese stewards of the bar, the lounges and the decks were white-clad, polite, and efficient

Days came and went without the usual atmosphere of a ship proceeding to the tropics, for it had been excessively hot all the

way from Brooklyn

'The "definite South American" types were not so very definite. It was explained to me that race prejudices were not sufficiently strong in the western part of the southern con tinent to prevent the blending of its masses. I was never quite sure, when basking in the charm of these Latin Americans, whether I was conversing with a half Indian, a pure-blooded Castilian, a twenty per-cent. Jew, or a quarter Panamanian negro.

Sounds a little extreme perhaps, but I found it so on this, my

first trip through the West Indies to Ecuador

When I tried to pin a label on one passenger, he exclaimed violently

'Spanish? From Spain? Hell no, I'm an American My grandfather would have beaten up the man who said he was anything but"

nything but"

Yet he admitted to a "half Mexican grandmother on the

other side"

But in all my mental debates concerning the nationality of the passengers, I usually found that I ended where I had begun. There was the loose limbed little man whose coal black curls

and mustachios were as freely lubricated as his joints. It was

always his pleasure to idle trunk-clad on the edge of the 'pool' until the approach of an audience to the Palm Court rails above gave him his cue to challenge the most un-aquatic swimmer. One could be unfailingly assured of his presence if the 'group' at any time included a lady "travelline alone".

As I overheard such an unchaperoned passenger remark resignedly one morning after.

"Why did you leave whilst he was there?"

Then there were the Honey mooners occupying the appropriate suite, who claimed the US as their nation. It had taken me some time to reach any conclusion regarding this couple before I learnt that they were "Americans". When I thought of the bride my mind dwelt on Latin Jewish blood. And the groom, I regarded, as a Cornishman with Scandinavian infusions.

They were a witty pair and spent much of this honeymoon voyage good humouredly deriding my first name which they hadn't heard before

That's what we'll call our first," they chided

I told them that they "hadn't heard nothin', yet", but did not give them the satisfaction of learning that I had an ultra Gaelic minded parent and a few more initials to spare

But speaking of Cornishmen—there was the mining man, his wife and small daughter, who had also travelled with me on the Monhotton

Discovering that we had both studied at the Camborne School of Mines we discussed his 'land of honey' and St. Austell "httper"

I introduced these people to the expedition and we were given some valuable hints concerning the country which we were to penetrate

There was the party of Americans ("getting away at Panama") who "liked to get hot". They exercised the ship's planos—wore out combs and paper until the early hours—and subsequently became the targets for some of the blackest high-powered glances that I've seen cast from any restrained breakfast table—but they amused me

One passenger especially not amused was a titled Frenchman whose brusque emotional Ah's and Oh's, as we swept past the Cuban coast and, later, through the wonders of the Panama Canal, shook his wared upper lip growth with such violence that I seemed to spend as much time watching his moustache points, as I did the filling of the locks When he saw the old French dredges rusting away and abandoned in a side river, teats rolled down his checks (this temporarily embarrassed me so that I departed) which, of course, was after we had left Christobal

As the Santa Barbara stidled and reversed in the muddy water around the Christobal docks, I stood on the top deck with Dick, gazing across not very interesting looking country towards nearby Colon

Dick was in the service of the United States Army, he had been here before

Three biplanes twisted about above this discoloured entrance to the Canal, broadcasting the chattering intermittent bank which practically all radial engined aircraft emit

"Trainers," he commented, "the field is over there." He pointed past a sorry looking palm tree, two green branches at the top, fifteen or sixteen hown ones hanging dejectedly over the dead looking trunk. Beneath a place where two or three bedraggled smoky clouds blended easily with a sky of practically the same colour, a plane was rumbling into a drome which looked about a mile from us, at what seemed to be a high landing speed.

"No trainer-that, one of our latest pursuit ships"

The sun barely filtered through the increasing number of straggling grey clouds and the haze over Christobal didn't cher what I felt to be a disappointing first sight of this doorway to the Canal.

I should not have tendered my thanks to anyone in a sufficiently authoritative position to have ordered me off the Santa Barbara for a year's stay in Christobal Even when I went ashore my opinion varied very little

Soon after the ship docked two women reporters of the Panama Star and Harald came aboard. They were surprised that Eric was not there, and showed us that the expedition had been occupying space in their paper for some time.

I felt very guilty when I read that they had described me as

an "aviator and navigator". I had approximately only twenty five hours solo to my credit, and once had owned a canoe

Christobal reminded me of Port Said, one noticeable difference being that here at the beginning of the Canal fewer landsharks encouraged me to buy

Motor car hire at every tropical port, however, never seems to vary very much, the fare is usually several dollars, rupees, piastres or shillings above the originally agreed price

I was surprised at the number of 'pony-buggies'—such as are found at Gibraltar

My afternoon at Colon passed with the purchase of a mess jacket (the cut of which forever removed the possibility that I might wear it other than in a jungle) a "mint julep" at the Hotel Washington, and subsequent exultation at having for once lived up to the alleged tendency of the Scot, I had seen a lot and had spent "vera little" ashore

But apart from its Hindu section, the sleepy town had not been conducive to heavy spending

One cannot say the same about the evening Vivacious night shrouded Christobal differs so much from its slumbering self by day

From the time that you step on to the half lighted wooden dock and stdle or bound out of the way of plunging netted bales, everything is different

The warehouse on the dock, through which the passengers must pass, is immediately responsive to the darkness that drops upon the post Previously languad, musty and unpleasant to inhale, it enlivens at once into an odd, animated setting of weirdness

Its atmosphere seems, and is, "spice permeated", and through this, visitors and sight-seers parade between bales and unpacked Fords in evening gowns, every moment having to skip from the path of an electric trolley

The "confusion" that you can see on Christobal docks after dark looks the same with or without a coated liver It is all unreal

As you walk ashore from the warehouse, unrefreshing types

of negroes in charge of big American tourers becken suggestively Drivers of horse buggies also pursue this line and illuminating cajolery and argument is employed to capture a fare

There seemed to be very little of this intense competition by day, the apparently disinterested attitude of the drivers then being a lazy "Take you if you want to go, but—-"

They know that the majority of their daytime fares usually

tide little more than the half mile to the Hindu shop fronts

By night their opportunities to exploit the tourist—especially the sensation-seeking type—are infinite——

The town seemed to be over run—not by its inhabitants

nor by giggling celebrating tourists——
But what appeared to be the whole of the United States land

and sea forces descended on Colon when the lights began to shine

The streets were dotted with khaki and white drill revellers

In estreets were dotted with knakt and white drill reveniers spilling through and from the swing doors of blazing cantinar.

It seemed that all the garishing lighting—abandoned as

It seemed that all the garishing lighting—abandoned as "too fierce" by the rest of the world—had been set up both outside and inside the saloons

The Navy and Army shouted against the thunder of crescendo-reaching trumpets The exertion with which they punched, bargained, and rumba'd sent many 'sober minded' tourists into ice-cold sweats

Little fuzzy and straight haired Panamanian dance 'dolls' formed the centre of many near brawls It seemed to be a case of "You boys got no more Okay, this is where we get off"

And they would, moving on to the next table to drape themselves around another party

The companionship of these "partners" appeared to be only

for the fittest surviving payroll
"How the hell can I send any of it home," complained a
sailor returning shortly to his Texas "small town"

sailor returning shortly to his Texas "small town"

At the same time across the table Dick was concluding deal
ings with a negro waiter

"Would you care to match up?" I heard him demand

"Okay," said the negro, turning away, "outside—I m ready when I've served these other men"

"There'll be a dead nigger in just ten minutes," said Dick, as he looked at his watch

The old game of the waiter charging extra per round when he found that any proffered bill was being paid without question It all ended, however, with a refund

Back aboard the ship again I received a telegram It was from a distant cousin on British Government service in Panama, suggesting that I should dine with him next evening

I had previously never met him He, apparently, had read my name amongst those on the published list of expedition members

The vessels now proceeded up the Canal or, geographically speaking, down it

The old catch as to the direction in which you are moving as you pass from the Atlantic to the Pacific

I consulted the ship's large-scale map again to convince myself that we were sailing more or less south-east, not west, although, of course, the general supposition of some "in the know" is that a Pacific bound ship sails east

What impressed me about the Canal was the extraordinary efficiency of it all, the upward motion of a powerful electric lift, as the gigantic steel gates closed silently and mysteriously, and an immense volume of frothing water, elevated us to daylight from the canyon of the locks

The neatness of the US Canal Zone camps was impressive The giants who parade along the locks in well-cut khaki troopertype uniform looked MEN and were

But in extraordinary contrast to all this neat efficiency, wild tangled jungle often bordered the Canal between each set of locks

"Why go to Ecuador for wild men?" chuckled a passenger who had read of our intentions in a paper bought at Christobal "Plenty waiting armed with their bows, only fifteen miles through there."

I told him not to spoil our fun and that we'd probably come back for these

Lunch was served on deck so that we could see this green spectacle of "nature in the raw"

"What a job they must have had to stamp out malana with all this so close," commented one of the few other English passengers

Half way along the Canal it is recorded on one of the rocky walls, which tower on either side of the ship, that the United States Government underwent its greatest engineering difficulty at that spot Culebra Cut

There is also a small waterfall on the left, as you move towards Balboa and the Pacific, which seemed at one time to be only twenty feet away, but it was probably much more

Before passing through the Canal, a special pilot 'takes over" the bridge

The powerful electric engines that travel on a terraced track beside the locks, tightening and slackening the ship's guide

ropes, work under the direction of this special Canal pilot The Captain is possibly biting his nails on one side—and again, he is probably not

The way in which these guide engines crawled languidly up and down the near vertical inclines at the end of each lock seemed to contradict gravity. The graning American peak capped drivers watched the gaping mouths, first above and then below them, with bored amusement. There were others among them who were merely bored and drove their engines as if in a blur and seeing nothing.

Finally we reached the end of the Canal at Balboa The Santa Rarbars drew in to dock at about seven thirty in the evening, and although it was dark we could see the Pacific beyond Nearby were two of the regular passenger scaplanes in which the length of the Canal could be flown for seven dollars, and Army planes crackled overhead in the darkness Well, I decided, I'm glad that I didn't go with Peter—

"Peter the Botanist" had decided to cross the Isthmus by train and drop off at various stations, to pursue butterflies

It was all botany as far as we were concerned

#### CHAPTER VII

WHEN Morgan plundered Old Panama he really started something For ever since then treasure has been associated with the ruins of the city

Its wealth and the wealth of its citizens at the time of Morgan's raid has always been theoretical as there were no records of any individual riches

However at the time Panama was the home of some of the wealthiest families of New Spain and certainly one of the richest cities

Here the Genoese slave dealers made their headquarters

and stored their immense fortunes
Old Panama's churches became the depositories for treasure
gained in one way or another by devout Catholics from the
various Latin Americas of that period

The Isthmus had every reason to be at that time one of the greatest treasure-coffers of the world. It was the starting point for many expeditions to the gold indeen Incas kingdom. Many plundering sea-craft used Panama Harbour as a base.

A few years ago an English company set out to recover any part of the treasures that might be still hidden on the Isthmus among the old ruins

Their equipment included electrical gold seeking apparatus and they chose the old site of San José church

A casket was discovered containing, among other things, a golden crucifix. But the exultation on the part of the searchers did not last when their activities were arrested by a quick thinker who produced documents to prove his ownership of the land and ruins. This individual successfully backed his claim that the government had no right to have issued the treasure-seeting concession.

Everything went against these treasure hunters and even the

recovered golden crucifix slipped through their fingers as the result of some "legal" twist

In despair they ceased operations and went home

But a treasure which existed in old San José and can be seen to-day in the newer church of that name was one of the temptations that lured Morgan to Old Panama This was the golden alter

Just before the raid San José was known as the richest church All the holy vessels were of gold or gem studded silver

At news of Morgan's approach, the padres of the city, knowing that the churches would be the first goal of the buccaneer, stripped these holy buildings of anything of value and hid the treasure. In some cases it was sent away in boats

But not so with San José Instead of being caught up in the wave of hysterical terror sweeping Panama, its priests remained outwardly calm and carefully closed the doors of their church

When the parates ultimately descended on San José they found the padres praying beside a plain white altar, set with cheap looking candlesticks and ornaments

Jerked to their feet the white-faced priests admitted to

They were kicked aside by a glaring disappointed Morgan who had heard of "wonderful treasures within this church" and who found a very impoverished looking altar covered with apparently valueless ornaments

The treasures of the church escaped the buccaneers By little short of a miracle San José withstood the fire when the city was burnt by the pirates

What was the secret of these friends of old Panana? How did they preserve their treasures from Morgan? It was simple but ingenious——

White paint had covered the golden altar, plaster and more paint the candelabra, the chalices, and all the valuable ornaments

paint the candelabra, the chalices, and all the valuable ornaments

The result of a little calm thought amidst a great deal of
panic

All the Panamanian lore swept through my head as I leant over the Sania Barbara's deck rail and—with probably two hundred others—watched the lighted wharf sidle closer "Come on, Al, we'll get a cab and shake up Panama"

"Sorry, but a cousin

"Yeah, I know, but a guy who's lived here nine years
Panama in the palm of his hand"

"Yes, I'll be letting a great chance slip by .. but I'd like to meet this cousin"

"Get away from relatives see Panama We're hiring

a big cab"

I compromised and rode with the big car from Balboa to the middle of 'flare' and neon lighted Panama—Panama with its traffic that drove on the left as did our own in England

Whilst we had hunted for the largest car in the big parking court near the Balboa wharves, nearby drivers of dilapidated motor buses had wheedled and cajoled with the crowd coming from the direction of the ship, for the privilege of driving them "into town"

"Hey-pull up here but you're going to miss everything, Al"

"Track you fellows down later "

But I didn't see them again until the "morning after" when the bows of the Santa Barbara were cleaving the blue Pacific

It only occurred to me that traffic was "driving on the left", when I had taken another cab I suppose Panama has its reasons

We drove to the outskirts of the city and ran along the sea wall for a while Finally the ear turned into a quiet avenue which was obviously part of a residential quarter, and I found that we had reached the address that had been telegraphed to me

Despite the fact that my cousin and his charming sister were Scottish, their house emanated a suggestion of everything that was "English" At the intersection of two New World continents where everything was savagely 'American', I could not, in the ordinary way, have conceived that such preservation of 'home atmosphere' was possible Furthermore I had been slipping into the relaxed ways of American living and had not considered 'dressing'

The Empire News came over the air well and through it we

learnt that Wiley Post and Will Rogers had been killed flying in an Alaskan fog

in an Alaskan fog
From the interior of his Austin saloon my cousin showed me

the Pacific, old Panama, and new San José
As we drove towards the ship through modern Panama and
Ballboa, I wondered whether my friends with "Panama in the
palm of their hand" were seizing more than I

Zig zagging through the warehouse between bales, cases, newly landed cars and bags stacked one on top of the other, the Austin finally pulled up at the bottom of the gape plank

My cousin and I shook hands and I walked up on to an almost desexted Santa Barbara

A few people—perhaps two or three—were chinking ice against the sides of their glasses in the veranda café

One of them, a lady passenger, described the evening as

being "insufferably close—too warm to be ashore"

I disagreed with her—it was too hot to stay aboard ship

We were not sailing until the 'early hours'
It took just a moment's hesitation to decide whether I too

should finish the evening chinking ice, with my feet on the deck rail

It seemed unsporting to go back into Panama after having been driven so carefully by my cousin to the foot of the gangway Yet I thought that I might as well see a little of the city night life and perhaps meet a scattered "Expedition" However, I did neither

On entering the town again I stepped out of the car and walked aimlessly along. All my enthusiasm to see a gay Pana seemed to have left me I was rapidly reaching the conclusion that my friend of the Senta Barbara had been right after all, it was too hot to really take an interest in things eithore

Peanut vendors, sellers of sickly looking candy and alternately blasts of sound from the cantinas moved past me as idly I walked through the garish streets

Occasionally one was not as well lit as another and remarks (I guessed at me) would be gabbled in Spanish from the gloom beyond shadowed doorways.

At one time, taking a short darkened cut from one lighted

street to another where there seemed to be a lot of traffic, I heard footsteps behind me—stealthy, pudded footsteps that one might have read about in a "London-after midnight" thiller

Secretive, breathless Spanish in my ears

I threatened the pander who had been following me

"Vamor," I was able to scowl It was about the only Spanish word that I knew I was pleased to have at my finger tips one that saved argument I thought it meant "scram"

Afterwards I learnt that it meant "Let's go", which ex-

plained the incident that followed

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Finally when my throat refused entry to a very warm beer, I rose from the messy drink splashed glass table and leaving the blatant cantina I returned to the ship

I had not seen any of my friends Others were returning as well when I walked up the gang plank for the second-time. I felt tired and temporarily disinterested in Panama I crawled to bed

Opening eyes to the following morning was rather like waking to a Christmas of the years before my teens

Everything to cheer the soul of Redskin minded youth lay piled new and shining on the two chairs shared by Peter the Botanist, and myself

Revolver holsters, a revolver belt, a 'money pouch', there may even have been a bow and arrow, certainly a lot of native souvenirs which, if we'd known it, were to be better available in Ecuador

A sleeping hulk of husky Germanic American flesh that was Peter had apparently been with the party which had 'field Panama in its hand' 'Was there anything that this fellow hadn't bought? I looked with certain envy at his colourful purchases and for no definite reason suddenly thought of Panama hats Why, when I had been on the spot, had I not thought of obtaining the real thing?

Some enlightened person informed me very patiently that day that Panama hats did not "come from Panama' but— Ecuador I suppose the Pacific really looks like any other ocean Possibly every other ocean can produce the same colourings, although I should always dispute this But, as far as I am concerned, the Pacific will always be the Pacific—different from the rest

Perhaps it is because the Pacific washes "the East", and New Worlds Perhaps it is because (as I should think more probable) it has been my good luck to spend years sunning myself on its golden beaches, gazing out at its blue rollers

I have been flung on my head and slammed on one of these beautiful sandy stretches by the fierce friendliness of the largest and "bluest" roller that it was ever my misfortune to attempt to "shoot"——

I have seen monster waves of this ocean carry thousands crest high through the sun and leave these thousands stranded above the golden waterline

If you have ever seen the supreme glory of a full tigged three masted barque threading its slightly rolling way through the Pacific before a warm breeze, with its bows cleaving a white furrow through the rich "blue".—

If you have ever slud between the Pacific's coral islands, sepecially up through the Great Barner Reef off Australis's eastern coastline and seen its sea snakes, gunt sharks, its flying fish, all playing along the top of its sparking waters—then you will be as fond off its at I am. You will think that you could recognize it—know it—if led blind folded to several occase.

Why, you will say, cannot the Atlantic—or for a second companison, the Indian Ocean—aupply these colours, this sparkle, this combination of fierce effort and gentle beaut), this "everyting" that is the Pacific?

Possibly it can 'Though to me it never will I expect because the Pacific "got there first" But I have never seen a beautiful Atlante, although I have ploughed my way across and through it, although I have bathed, yachted and fished in it several tume.

Nassaul Nassaul—I can hear "Bahamas lovers" shouting But then I can only say I am sorry, I have never called at Nassau. I have not yet seen the beaches of "Rio" and the rest of eastern South America. All my early associations were, as I must inevitably repeat, with the Pacific-

And when I looked through the porthole over Peter's carcase the morning after leaving Panama, I felt that I could smell, feel and "see" the difference in the plunging combers that slapped against the Santa Barbara.

Imagination? Pacific prejudice? Perhaps---

Although we were out of sight of land there was a very definite South American atmosphere about the ship.

"Why not," you might ask; "you said that this fact was

noticeable the moment you embarked at Brooklyn"

Yes, it had seemed so. In contrast to New York the ship had certainly flavoured of things Spanish, but after a day at sea I seemed to meet only Americans The South Americans on board kept very much to themselves.

And the orchestra, which had played a rumba with such tropical gusto whilst the Santa Barbara lay alongside the Brooklyn wharf, seemed to shed its Latin tempo after leaving New York barbour.

Now, however, a very evident dash of the southern continent pervaded the ship. Possibly the last lock of the Panama Canal shutting off New York and the Atlantic plus its "rest-ofthe-world" contacts was having a psychological effect on the passengers from both North and South America Perhaps it was because the Honey-mooners and holiday makers had left the Santa Barbara at Panama

Whatever it was I found it impossible to suppose—even when I experimented with my imagination-that I was not journeying down the South American coast at all, but heading towards China, Australia or California-anywhere in fact other than the direction in which I was actually travelling

Perhaps the real reason for this was the return to life of the South Americans who had probably felt like fish out of water in the Atlantic.

In any case they became obvious, that is to say, they did not remain quietly in their little groups. They became gay, they played deck games, they danced, they achieved attitudes which suggested that they were of importance in their own countries.

Meanwhile those Americans on board who had still clung to that "on leave" spirit all the way down the Atlantic coasts, even to Panama, now wore a dejected look as if to say with resignation "All this over again "

Some, however, were quite glad to return to South America "After a couple of leaves," they said, "you are glad to get back to be the big man in your little tin pot republic-after

the first shock of finding that you're small time stuff in the States " "And after a few years in South America," chimed in

another, "you'll find that you just don't fit in back home-no, Sub, you certainly don't "

### CHAPTER VIII

"WELL, I'm looking for something on Incas-"

The library steward of the forward lounge moved between the two glass cases, separated by a wide electrical hearth.

"Conquest — Conquest — Con — came back yesterday — m-hm, here it is—gives you the whole works——"

He handed me a large volume.

"The Conquest of Pern? Pern? Afraid that my Incas will be Echadorian . . . I think . . . getting off to-morrow . . ."

"Ecuador? Why Inca Peru included all Ecuador and some more . . . Bolivia . . . Chile . . ."

I took the book and turned to the nearest calico-covered easy chair.

"If you're landing at Guayaquil, you want to whale into it
... fine record . . . tells just how Pizarro put those Incas

in a spot . . ."

I opened the green cover and noticed that the book was by

"The Empire of Peru," I read, "at the time of the Spanish invasion, stretched along the Pacific from about the second degree north to the thirty-seventh degree of south latitude."

I remembered that the equator ran through Ecuador slightly to the north of Quito the capital—that "the second degree north" should consequently correspond with the most northerly part of the country.

"The thirty-seventh degree of south latitude." Surely that would be somewhere about the middle of present-day Chile.

And what of this Pizarro who led the invasion, which resulted in the consequent collapse of the Incan Empire-exactly who, and "what", was he?

Francisco Pizatro, I learnt, was born at Trujillo, a "city of Estremadura in Spain", towards the end of the fifteenth century Decause he was illegitimate his actual birth-date was not recorded. It was said that he received hitle care from his parents, and that they deserted him.

Pizatro had no early education and his chief occupation was that of swineherd

But the highly-coloured tales regarding life in the "New World" captured his imagination and he finally made his way to Seville, the "port where the Spanish adventurers embarked to seek their fortunes in the West"

He was next heard of in the New World at the island of Hispaniola in 1710, establishing a name for himself or various expeditions. He co-operated with Balboa in establishing the settlement of Darien, and was among the first Europeans to be "constraint the local way and the South Court".

"greeted with the long promised vision of the Southern Ocean"

More expeditions

It was in 1315, when he was selected to trade with natives on the shores of the Pacific for gold and pearls among the neighbouring islands that, "as his eye ranged along the shadowy line of coast till it fielded in the distance", his imagination may have been first fired with the idea of one day attempting the conquest of the mysterious regions beyond the mountains.

In 1322 Pascual de Andagoya, a "cavalier of much distinction in the colony of Panama", led an expedition southwards, but he did not get far and bad health caused him to return in the same year

But the stones that he brought back of the opulence of the countries to the south created a craze for such expeditions Yet most of the tales told by Andagoya appear to have been based on supposition—his own supposition

An agreement between Diego de Almagro, a soldier of forune—Hernando de Luque, a Spanish ecclesistic, and Francisco Pizziro—culinnated in the departure of an expedition in November, 1324, captained by Pizziro, consisting of a hundred men mostly recruited from the hangers-on of the Luthrinus.

De Luque chiefly financed this expedition Almagro was to follow Pizarro in a smaller ship as soon as it could be fitted out

Unfortunately for Pizarro's party it was the rainy season when storms were sweeping the South American "west coast"

His first expedition inland near to Puerto de Pinas, then the most southernly known point, was an unhappy one Swamps, morass fringed with tangled undergrowth-rough rocky country-heat-lack of food, distressed the men Yet Pizarro did what he could to revive their spirits and with them returned to his ship to proceed further south

But storms—the depressing coastline—but chiefly shortened rations, created a discontent to a point where Pizarro decided that it would be wisest to send his ship back for supplies in the charge of a man named Montenegro, who took with him half

the company

The men left behind lived on shell fish and bernes, some of which were poisonous Many consequently suffered Pizarro's sympathy with his men and the fact that he readily shared his scanty provisions won their admiration But a despondency had settled upon them as the weeks wore on-twenty of the party had died-and expectation that the ship would ever return, merely flickered occasionally They called this place

Puerto de la Hambre, 1 e . Port of Hunger

Then came the turning point News arrived of a "light" having been seen further into the jungle

The emaciated party plunged through the woods and came upon an Indian village which, much to the surprise of the

inhabitants, they immediately plundered for food Crude gold ornaments hung about the necks of the natives

Pizarro with lighted eyes, having annexed what he could of st, learnt from these people of a great and wealthy empire fur-ther south—of a monarch living "ten days' trek across the mountains" and of an invasion of his kingdom Records sug gest that they referred to the Inca Huayna Capac's invasion of Quito, which took place several years before Pizarro's journey south

The good fortune of the party culminated in the appearance of Montenegro and the re provisioned ship six weeks later

Pizatro's men, thin and worn, soon forgot their troubles after a few days good food and once again were eager to sail on towards this mystery civilization

At their next call inland still further to the south the party came upon an Indian hamlet which had been abandoned at their approach. Here they were delighted to find more gold omancents, but were at the same time hornfied to discover human flesh that had been left rossting by a fire. This sign of cannibalism so upset the party that they decided to leave.

Once again they hugged the coast meeting storms which strained the ship Anchoring off a point which Pizarro named Pinta Quemada, he decided on yet another expedition inland This resulted in the discovery of a town of even larger size than the previous one

The Indians fled-the Spaniards collected their gold.

The tribe returned and attacked with arrows and darts Several of the party were killed, despite their mailed armour Pizarro himself was wounded in seven places

The expedition decided to turn back to Panama for the stormweakened ship to be refitted Yet when they had reached Chicama, a point on the mainland slightly to the west of Panama, Pizatro decided to disembark with most of his company, feeling that an appearance in Panama at this point would be premature. The ship, however, was despatched to Panama with the gold that had been collected and the ship's treasurer had instructions to report their "successful" discoveries to the Governor

All this time Pizarro's partner Almagro had been fitting out his own ship in Panams. Eventually with sury men he followed the sea route which Pizarro was known to have taken Almagro called at all the points named by his finend—Pierro de Pinas, Pierro de la Hamber, Pueblo Quemada

He too had "incidents" with Indians-and recovered gold,

more gold in fact than Pizarro

His expedition continued on until he reached the mouth of the river ultimately to be named Rio de San Juan, four degrees above the equator, which means that it was about two degrees north of Ecuador The Indian villages he encountered were finer in their con struction the further he went south. But perhaps the amount of gold that he had already collected—certainly the distressed conviction that Pizarro had foundered—caused him to return towards Panama

Calling at the Pearl Islands—a rendezvous of traders—he learnt of Pizatro waiting at Chicama They met and exchanging reports pledged themselves to die rather than abandon the enterprise

It was decided that Pizatro should stay where he was and that Almagro should continue on, to lay his case before the Governor of Panama and perhaps obtain further backing from De Luque

But the Governor, with a rebellion in Nicaragua on his mind, was not disposed to listen to Almago's colourful report on the amazing quantities of gold to be obtained in South America—he discredited it from the first

Probably he was biased by tales that had filtered back to Panama of Pizatro's loss of men to Indian spears and starvation De Luque who took a more enterprising view turned the

De Luque who took a more enterprising view turned the Governor's head in favour of Almagro, but was unable to convince him of the worth of Pizarro

Consequently Almagro was named as Pizarro's equal in the next expedition

next expedition

Learning of this Pizarro suspected his friend, and from then viewed him with permanent distrust

Nevertheless, on March 10th, 1526, an agreement was drawn up between Pizarro, Almagro and De Luque, who agreed to finance the other two to the extent of twenty thou sand pross. Each was to have a third of the lands and wealth to be discovered in the south.

Two larger ships were purchased but they found difficulty in botatung men. Eventually they mustered about one hundred and saxty—as well as a few horses. Their supply of ammunition though inadequate, was better than before. They engaged a good navigator called Bartholomew Ruz.

The expedition sailed straight to the Rio de San Juan, the most southerly point previously reached by Almagro

Here in the fine Indian villages they laid their hands on so much gold that Almagro decided to return yet again to Pianas for reinforcements, with the plundered gold as a bait to new recruits Pizarro stayed in open country near the Rio de San Juna nad the navigator Ruiz cruised further down to the small island of Gallo, where he had an unfirendly reception from the native inhabitants. So he sailed to what was ultimately called the Bay of Sc Matthew

Here he found the Indian population even greater, but there were no signs of hostility

Once again at sea, he was surprised by the approach of a strange balas raft with a sail. He was impressed by the ornaments of the several men and women on board and especially by their woollen clothing "of brilliant colouring embroidered with figures of burds and flowers".

Here was proof of an intelligent civilization Two of the Indians had come from a place called Tumbes, to the south They claimed that their monarch owned animals which Ruiz recognized from the description as being sheep. They admitted to the considerable use in their kingdom of gold and silver

Ruiz believed only half of this "information" He sailed on until he had crossed the equator and then turned back to report to Pizarro, taking with him the two Indians from Tumbes

He found Pizatro having difficulty in finding proper food for his men and in combating fever which had resulted from the penetration of swamps Shortly after Ruz arrived, Almagro sailed in from Panama with new men

The statements supplied by the Indians which Ruiz had brought back with him stimulated the enthusiasms of his friends

Tumbes It seemed to ring literally of glittering possibilities Its description coincided with the Spaniards' pleasantest dream.

There followed a cruise south of both vessels to the coast of what is now Esmeraldas. The appearance of further precious metal and emeralds—the appearance as well of "civilized" townships of a warlike race.

Once again the ships turned back, and it was decided to 8, found a camp further north on the dreary island of Gallo, to be safe from the Indians of the mainland.

At this the crews were inclined towards mutiny. Almagro was to return to Panama for further provisions. Those left behind attempted to send letters back to the Government

pleading to be taken off the island. Almagro burnt these letters, yet a distressed note reached Panama enclosed in a ball of cotton, which had been taken as

a specimen to be presented to the "Governor's lady". Two ships were at once sent to bring back the expedition.

Revived by the food brought by these ships, the men's

sense of proportion returned. Pizarro dismayed at the thought that his exploration should terminate so soon, traced a line in the sand with his sword from east to west. Turning towards the south, he cried: "Friends and comrades, on that side is toil, hunger, nakedness, the drenching storm, desertion and death; on this side ease and pleasure. There lies Peru with its riches; here, Panama and its Choose, each man, what best becomes a brave Castilian. For my part I go south." And having said this he stepped across the line. Thirteen men followed him, one of them being Ruiz the navigator.

But Pizarro sent Ruiz back, with the two relief ships, to co-operate with Almagro and Luque. The little party on the island were without a vessel when it was decided to move twenty-five miles northwards to the higher and more habitable island of Gorgona. This was done by raft. While they found edible animals and pheasants on the island, there were as many insects as had tortured them at Gallo.

Meanwhile the two ships reached Panama and the Governor fumed at finding that Pizarro had refused to return.

But Almagro and De Luque after some difficulty managed to persuade him that Pizarro's attitude was in the interests of the Crown, and with reluctance the Governor consented to the despatch of a small ship, with a positive command that Pizatro should return within six months. The ship was to be sent with just enough hands to man her.

"Men's lives are of value," he had raged.

Pizarro and his men were eventually taken off Gorgona by this little vessel, after a seven months' stay on the island

This time, decided Pizarro, there would be no hitch With the two Indians of Tumbes on board they would sail direct for this alleged "El Dorado" Yet they did not sail direct but

put in at several points along the coast

Nevertheless, twenty days after leaving Gorgona, the ship glided into the "waters of the beautiful gulf of Guayaquil" "Guayaquil to morrow morning at ten," volunteered Peter the Botanist as I took my place for lunch

Struggling to my deck-chair on the Santa Barbara's starboard side, in a way which accurately suggested a too well appeased appetite, I again opened the book

The country around the Gulf of Guayaquil, I learnt, had apparently been "studded with towns and villages" at the time

of Pizarro's arrival

His party were now abreast of a magnificent range of stupendous heights A mountain known now as Chimborazo-and another, Cotapaxi, towered their brilliant white domes from a high ridge of the Andes

The Spaniards at length came to anchor off the island of Santa Clara, "lying at the entrance of the Bay of Tumbes".

On the foreshore of the mainland the people of Tumbes gathered, gazing with open eyes at the floating castle

But the inhabitants of this floating castle—what was passing

through their minds?

Here in front of them was the alleged El Dorado-would they find it to be so? Had the violent gestures of the Indian's

sign language been misinterpreted?

After a visit to the ship by a leader of these people on the shore, a Spanish captain sent one of his own men, Alonso de Molina, accompanied by a negro, to in turn pay the Incas a wist

One is amazed at this repression of impulse Pizziro apparently did not wish to rush his "prize" and create hostility, as he had on several occasions further north, when his men had massacred their way to the gold of the coastal villages

The Indians on the shore looked in wonderment at De

Molina's beard-they were equally surprised at the colour of his negro's skin

De Molina was shown a temple ornamented with gold and silver to such an extent that Pizarro did not believe his report, and sent a more trustworthy emissary, Pedro de Candia, who reported the same facts

Tumbes was discovered to be a favourite city of the Inca princes Next to the then recently acquired town of Quito, it was the most important place in Northern Peru A great Inca Tupac Yupangui was found to have established a fortress there. And the temple ablaze with precious metal, also a specially large and correspondingly embellished house, had both been erected by the monarch, Huayna Capac

This "house" was a numery occupied by young women known as Virgins of the Sun

Tumbes was, of course, the first really large and rich Incan city that Pizarro had seen He discovered that the inhabitants of the district were racially Yungas and had been subjects of a leading power known as the Grand Chimu until they had been conquered by the Incas

The gods of the Yungas were not replaced by those of the Incas, but occupied important positions in the temples alongside them

All shrines of worship were heavily inlaid with gold and outstanding among them all was that of a giant "fish god" (cast in this very common metal-gold-and) decorated with emeralds and pearls

Pizarro found the Incas taking an exceptional interest in an fron hatchet which he presented to one of the leaders. The metal fascinated them. They appeared to be surprised at its hardness, and altogether unfamiliar with iron

After this the Spanish captain began to realize why gold and silver was so commonly used among the Indians as a "base metal"

Unknown to the Spaniards, the Indians regarded the party and their horses as semi-divinities Had Pizarro's men not been ignorant of this fact they could have easily acquired a great deal of the treasure about them, merely by asking for it

Instead their one idea of securing what they saw, was to take possession of it by force

Yet these men realized that their number, which was about a hundred, would have a slender chance in any combat with the several thousand inhabitants of Tumbes

Also this introduction to the Empire of the Incas had encounged Pizziro to make the expedition even more exploratory. The gold would always be ornamenting the temples and big buildings of Tumbes, the party told themselves. Why encumber the ship now when the storage space could be more suitably used for provisioning?

So Pizarro sailed further south without having molested the city. On his return up the coast De Molina and a few others were left at their own request in Tumbes, and Pizarro set a course for Panama, where it was his intention to recruit a small "Army" to conquer the Incas—and of course win the treasures which he had seen

But three years slipped by before he again sailed for Peru In those three years he had been forced to visit Spain in order to secure royal support for his projected conquest. No one will ever really know what happened to the men who were left in Tumbes Perhaps their gold lust became too great Perhaps they quartelled with the Incas—or died from fever

It is more or less supposed fact that they disclosed to the Indians the true purpose of Pizarro's visit, and that there was nothing immortal about the party

Pizziro left Panama with a large body of men and a contented feeling. He sailed directly for Tumbes intending to stimulate the adventurous spirit of his new men by acquiring a great deal of treasure from the start.

But once again it was the stormy season and head winds slowed his progress to a standstill. He decided to land his men and rush overland. The ship was to follow along the coast when the weather subsided

The trek led them through swamp country, thick jungles, and over desert paramos. Yet they pushed on finding encour agement in the fact that they came upon several snail gold laden towns which were successfully looted. It had all seemed so easy that it was with happy anicipation that they awaited reinforcements a few miles outside Tumbes preparatory to falling upon the city and sacking it

A combat between the Spaniards and an Indian tribe the Punas from the Island of Puna in the Gulf of Guayaquil find also been a successful one from the Spaniards' point of view and the men became impatient to reach the treasure such a

short distance away

Finally reinforcements came by sea in the form of a hundred
men under the command of a captain Hernando de Soto He
brought with him a number of horses and at once this united
party prepared to march upon the city

But disappointment—a very decided disappointment awaited

them

Reaching the city, they swept forward half crazed with

hysterical expectation Then they halted
Tumbes—the greatest treasure city that Pizziro had visited

was deserted

The Spanards straned their ears for sounds of habitation and heard nothing They surged forward and through the houses and temples No part of the treasure was to be found in the city No trace could be found of the men whom Pizarro had left there

Some of the inhabitants were found hiding outside the city Captured, these people explained with conflicting statements how De Molina and his friends had met their death

Pizarro realized that word had passed ahead of him of the "excesses" of his party—that it would always be so unless he adopted more friendly tactics and sowed firmer seeds of good will among the Incas So he issued orders that there were to be no reprisals for the loss of De Molina's party

But Pizziro was brutal by nature It was not with honeyed words alone that he continued south and conquered the Incas

A fresh breeze was cooling the sunny deck. The ship rode comfortably across the Pacific swell as I rose more or less un obtrosively from my chair to avoid awakening the "siesta" enthusiasts around me

They must have been 'well away', for explosions from the clay pigeon shooting and sounds of hilarity and of reluctant

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### CHAPTER IX

OUTSIDE the ship the early morning sky was entirely grey It was almost dank, half misty, just short of being cold Dark river banks were sliding past, dead and live trees clung

to dreary, muddy soil

The river itself was muddy, brown, dirty, threatening It was easier to think of a flooded Niger, rather than a South

American sea river

Yet I hadn't seen the Niger so that I couldn't tell Entirely ringing my head with the porthole, and almost kneeling on Peter I looked up-river towards the bows, looked in the direction of an invisible Guayaquil, at the limitless road of discoloured water about.

On the prowling sizeable brown rollers, which were patrolling the chilled river, a cigar shaped wooden dug-out, grey and dark, bobbed up and down just ahead of the Santa Barbara

As the port side of the ship ploughed past it fifty yards away the two negro occupants sat still and silent

No gesticulation, no shouting, no carefree wave with which the aquatic natives of other countries invariably greet a passing steamer.

I looked back at them as the dark dug-out encountered our stern wash Still not a move—no sound, not a gesture

They weren't even paddling, just sitting, toned in with their rough craft as if part of it. I should say they looked depressed But I could hardly see their expressions

Perhaps they had been out since the early hours, perhaps the canoe was leaking. They were undoubtedly cold

I had thought of African rivers—this dug-out successfully fitted in—the two negroes completed the picture

When I strolled on deck after a comfortable American breakfast I found the world outside had been cheered by a conquering sun Patches of azure showed through the grey above As I watched, the river became brighter. The mist in the sky broke into definite clouds The azure patches grew larger, wider, infinite-

"And all this leads to a Pacific hell hole," volunteered the man who didn't "fit in back home".

"Oh-I'd heard it was an interesting place."

"Yep, but a hell hole."

"Every disease under the sun, almost every plague known to man has paid a call " "And at practically every other tropical port," I suggested

"Yes-maybe that's so "

He pondered a little

"Yet maybe not This city has dealt some death-stinging nunches "

"In common with other equatorial spots," I reminded

He remained silent, bit his lip, and subsequently walked away

I regretted having argued, about a place that I hadn't visited, with a man who had obviously been there. Then my thoughts turned to pleasanter things than plagues

Where was Tumbes, I wondered, the half Incan treasure city that Pizatro had discovered when he'd sailed along this coast? In the Gulf of Guayaquil, records had claimed I consulted a map Tumbes lay further to the south

It was difficult to connect this dreary looking river with In can treasure of emeralds and gold Yet I could hardly dispute history, that is to say "alleged history" (if we are to cast the slightest suspicion on the many assertive records which set

down the same facts) But there was no doubt that this was the Guayaquil Riveror that those members of the expedition who were aboard ship were to step ashore within an hour or so to an ex Kingdom of the gold familiar Incas

And a little concentration on this fact alone enabled me to view the desolate-looking mudbanks, the forlorn looking upstream horizon, through eyes that came near to being dazzled by the possibility of what lay ahead

On the day of our arrival I called at a bank to which a transfer had been made for me from London

As I was arranging my affairs a young Englishwoman beside me spoke through the cage to an English member of the staff——

"Don't think I'll wait I'm off whilst the going's good "

Before I could turn to apolgize for having kept her waiting she had disappeared Then I stared at the doorway. The door was being closed I looked towards the large windows. Their barricades were being put up. I listened. There seemed to be some shouting in the streets.

"Have you got a gun?" dramatically asked the young Englishman in the "cape"

It was a revolution I'd been in Equador one hour

A London paper published the following account of it next day

# "REBEL OUTBREAK IN ECUADOR

"Quito, August 20th

A minor revolution appears to have broken out in Ecuador, where strong action has been taken by the President, Dr Velasco Ibarra, in placing under arrest leaders of Congress and Army commanders who are declared to be in opposition to him

'Trouble began when the President issued a decree postponing the meeting of Congress, which under statute meets for a ninety-day session each year on August 10th until October 12th Revolt among members of Congress, and early to-day the President tools action by imprisoning a number of the Opposition leaders

Two days later yet another article appeared in the British press:

# "ECUADOR QUIET

New York, August 22nd

Don Antonio Pons, who had resigned the office of Prime Minister, has been chosen by the Army as President of the new Provisional Government of Ecuador The former President, Don José Velasco Ibarra, was released from deteniion to-day and went to the Colombian Legation in Quito

"It is reported that provincial garrisons are supporting Schor Pons Colonel Andrade said yesterday that the country was quiet, and that the people had accepted the change of Government with surprising equanimity

"The overthrow of President Ibarra is reported to be due to the Army's traditional support of the Constitution When, as alleged, this was threatened by the President, the Army deserted him The Action Civica, a senti Fascist organisation, and the police were expected to aid President Ibarra. But when the Army declared for the Constitution, the police deserted the President, and he failed to win the support of the Action Civica."

All the Revolution that I saw was a parade that gathered loiterers as it went up one street and down another

There was of course the shouting There were the inevitable soldiers (mounted as far as I can remember in this case—on mules) with guns A few of the marchers had small arsenals as well

I was told that the Opposition was marching from the other end of the town—that inevitably they would clash

Later I could see in the distance a fair percentage of the population gathering around the Customs house. I knew that Mont and Peter were there collecting baggage, but I omitted to subsequently demand their eye witness account of what had been going on It is possible that it speeded their luggage examination, or conversely, the "officials" may have run out side to participate in the proceedings. The only obvious effect that the Revolution had on us was an enforced thirst. Every

bell hop, every saloon-keeper's assistant, rushed out to join in

whatever was going on

Hearsay in Latin America suggests that the individual citizen near the thick of a revolution never eschews the opportunity to dispense with a personal bete noire But it is also responsible for a lot of silly rumours, and although a sudden deficiency of mother in laws during such a political event would not con found me, these are more dangerous than true So that it is hardly worth recording here the lurid activities that were said to take place during revolutions

A young American whom I met in the U S Consulate invited me "around the corner" to see his small radio-gramophone

shop which he said just paid his dies "Boy, and am I stuck in this country"

Quite a crowd were around his enterprise when we reached it. News of the revolution in Quito was coming through

Later, speaking with a member of another consulate I mentioned that I was surprised at being asked that day if I

carried a gun

Yes, it appeared, a lot, in fact most people, carried an auto-But if you sat down to drink or to play cards after dark, with a South American, it was advisable to insist politely that both your gun, and that of your Latin friend, be handed to the temporary custody of the bar tender

Many of his friends had become clients of the local undertaker as the result of their under-estimation of such a pre-

caution "There's no getting away from it," he asserted, "tempers here are quicker than a flash "

And so had been my first impression of Guayaquil How had I formed that fleeting opinion that the town held none of those things which, in my mind, constituted the real South America?

For now behind its front door I found a city steeped in every sort of romance, even "intrigue" Its music was in keeping with the heat of the days through which it lived Very soon I located a bull fight The colour, the mantillas, the theatrical scenes of my conception, were all to be found close at hand

As if to convince me later in the evening a guitar laden cavalier put one foot upon the kerb and serenaded a balcony above

Human skins ranged in colour from negroidal shades to a powdered white It seemed that the open air shops, with and without their electricity or 'flates' could only be run with the maximum amount of chatter

I have no idea of the hour that marked closing time. It must have been a very late one.

With the coming of darkness music shops merely increased their volume of eastenetted sound

The city awoke and seemed unreal, as had Panama

I have recollections of our passing through all this un reality to pay our respects to officialdom

I have visions of resplendent uniforms and much heel clicking

The atmosphere of the official building possessed a colourful flavouring of Runtania

And despite the Revolution we were received with an almost extravagant courtesy

I can see myself climbing up a passport photographer's stairway to comply with further regulations I can also see myself emerging some time afterwards with something that I should have been delighted to bury

Lunch had been easy Friends from the Santa Barbara had helped us cope

But at dinner we were on our own

"Comido-I'll have comido," I said confidently, picking at random from the top of the menu

The mozo acknowledged my "choice ' with a polite gesture. Then we both waited

"I think it's your move again," said a cautious Mont waiting to see what my words would produce

" Comido-this-sec-comido-couido-" with an attempt to command the situation

The waiter inclined his head again

"Sı-sı-señor-claramente y que

"M mm? 'Nother name for it," I hazarded to the others

I spoke again to the perplexed fellow awaiting a less confused order

"Yes-PLEASE-'claramentay'---"

"St, st, st, señor, pero que .?"

"Oh-o-oh, it's 'perroquet'-of course, the country's full of them-no gracias, I'll try something else-"

"Parrot, huh?" said a member of the expedition "Go on,

have some, we want him to get around to us " A helpful American at the next table leant over

"Say-'comido' means dinner, pick on anything else"

If the others had ever wanted to stab me in the back, they had that-

I forget what subsequently arrived It makes little difference for I didn't consume it

Whilst disembarking from the Santa Barbara, I had wondered if that tooth would howl for long Now it was positively yelping-

This is very fine, I reflected I envisioned myself canoeing after Indians with such a tooth

"That's okay, I ll pull it," grinned a maliciously delighted Mont, with his mind on our limited surgical kit "It's too late for a dentist now "

But it wasn't He had forgotten that we were headlines

"Por aqua"

The small hotel boy pointed through the half lit doorway

As each stair creaked with my weight, it seemed to grow darker I strode up two flights with an attitude of easy nonchalance,

but with thoughts apprehensively dwelling on inquisition sadism, and eventually found myself in the waiting room, typical of a fifth rate London film agent There were no furnishings-just a form The town's street lights filtered through a window

I went to a door and knocked It was opened and the bene volent professor like Ecuadorian appeared

He spoke English

Yes, it was quite all right—he had been warned that I was coming

And so we were to penetrate the Oriente to study the Incas, He had a friend who had been there to catch butterfliesalthough he hadn't returned-vet-

I sat rigidly in the chair and watched him run his fingers through the tousled brown mass that was his head I thought of Tolstov.

It would not be long before I'd know the limits of his butchery Recently I read of a European dictator who sits complacently with abstract thoughts and no anæsthetic whilst his gums are being tortured. I have a sneaking regard for such nerve-the same regard that I have for a person who can turn a live octopus inside out Incidentally dentists' drills and "octopi" are my two yery

special aversions. I once had an octopus clinging around my neck for ten minutes. I matured at once This shaggy but kindly individual advanced, instrument in

hand. Thoughts of the incredible tortures with which his ancestors

had conquered the Incas Thoughts of the present day presumable lust for blood in the local Plaza del Toros, thoughts of bartenders minding guns-

"Open, please"

It was the most comfortable performance Perhaps it was his subtle anasthetic wit and unlimited fund of anecdotes. He was an intelligent fellow, apt to become profound as he hovered over my distressed tusk. I found that my brain creaked as I reached out for the involved philosophies which he flaunted in my face, and found solace for my molar in the fact that none of them accommodated fatalism-

Small negroes offered a shoe-shine as I walked back through the cobbled streets I could smell the 'freshness' of the "Front" ahead of me and because I always appreciate my full

quota of ozone I was glad to get there quickly. Other negroes appeared with lottery tickets-

"Treinta nul sucres . . !"

For quite a time I saw Guayaquil only through strings of shoe laces held in front of my nose, whilst trays of ice-cream and

green and red cordials were pushed forward as well I was obviously a "tenderfoot" gringo and every vendor on hand seemed to be trying the "long shot" of a sale To discourage them I achieved a "vayase" which I'd learnt soon after landing At this they would draw back a little and lag behind dogging my footsteps with unintelligible observations and obvious glee I knew then what must pervade the mind of a cub-master leading a church parade

There were exultant yells as I emerged from a hat shop with a new Panama, after my denials that I possessed any centavos The parade lasted as far as the hotel where it had reached dimensions undoubtedly mistaken as political

During the evening, over a luke warm Pilsener, I was offered confirmation of what I had already been told Namely that the area of Ecuador is "disputed" This is because the vast frontier east of the Andes, in the drainage basin of the Upper Amazon, is all unsurveyed and much of it unexplored Claims by Ecuador, Peru, Colombia and Brazil conflict But I gathered that the most acceptable estimate seems to be 118,500 square miles, yet the extreme official Ecuadorian claim is nearly 276,000 square miles

There were other facts which were of interest, if not surprising The population figure was indefinitely set between "one-and a half and two-and-a half millions" Two hundred thousand of these were said to be of pure European blood There were sixteen thousand more people in Guayaquil than

in Quito the capital

Despite the fact that I was in Ecuador, there were many geographical features of which I knew nothing I had not yet seen a good map of the country, but I learnt the following

plain facts about it-

The Pacific Coast of Ecuador extends from about a hundred miles north of the Equator to four hundred miles south of it. Colombia bounds it on the north and Peru on the south These three countries claim a great deal of territory "to the east", so that this boundary is uncertain

Two cordillers of the Andes cross Ecuador, with at least a

dozen peaks above sixteen thousand feet in height.

Chimborazo, at over twenty-one thousand, is the highest Mining has only been slightly developed, though the country is known to be rich in minerals. Thinking of all the gluttering Incan love that my mind had "sponged up" on board the Lawts Barbara, I hoped that we would do something, stimble upon something, which might remedy this situation in part.

sounctung, which might remedy this situation in part And most of the country to the east was and to be "trigin forest", with a great deal of rubber near the disputed boundary. Besides the smart looking Panama hats (such as my purchase of earlier in the day) caco, vroy muts, coffee, other head gear, hides and rubber, from cultivated estates, are the chief exports Ecuador was alleged to import textules, foodstuffs, machinery and clothing. It was supposed to have once produced half the world's supply of cacto, the seed that gives cocoa and choosale, but a disease known as the "witch broom" had cut production to a third of what it was in its hey-day. Petroleum and gold was exported from the country as well, and "both may one day be the medium to its undoubted future."

And of Guayaquil I received confirmation concerning those disputed mutterings of my fellow passenger coming up the area. The post had been a hotbed of yellow fever. A scientific fight had been waged after the Rockefeller Foundation's survey in 1916 and in May, 1920, the Director General of Public Health, announced that the disease had been "stayed". I was glad to hear this, though I alterwards met people who claimed that there were still occasional cases. But none came to my notice, whilst I was in Ecuador.

## CHAPTER X

"OKAY-about eight thirty"

He may have exaggerated when he called it the "greatest" private collection in the world It is probable. I don't know, for it was the only one that I have seen embracing every side of Incan life But what a collection!

He had glanced about the hall cafe of the hotel as he told us of its existence 'not a great many miles out of the city" He had been most secretive as to the name of the collector or what it was Incan that he collected

The only possible answer to this would have been 'Everything "

It was with the right air of mystery that we stepped from the shadows into the dark interior of his American sedan Three minutes after it swung around corners of gloomy cobbled back streets and drove - "out of the city"

We were expected We were welcomed in an atmosphere of secrecy We were fed with creamy chocolate cake and Pilsener

We were 'observed', and then led to the collection

White throne like stone chairs on a small cement back veranda introduced us to the room of curios beyond And I

repeat-what a collection!

The earthenware vessels that we had expected The extraordinary wood-carved figures and their extended arms The unexpectedly coloured pieces of Inca clothing The golden ornaments that put us in an exceptionally good humour and confirmed our frequent yet hesitant assertions on the subject of Inca 'treasure'

In lemon yellow gold there were ear rings, bangles, finger

rings, necklaces, armlets, fish hooks

There may have been a few golden nails amongst this dazzling assortment—I don't recollect them—yet it is known that the Incas used them in their doors and regarded the metal as commonplace

What does the ordinary man do when confronted with a collection like this?

In a famous museum he raught take at for granted In the home of a private individual who intunates cautiously that he has picked and dog up every ornament and soutent himself from sites of old Incas treasure cities, it is little short of exciting

We found it so

There was every possibility that we might unearth such treasures ourselves-

The main purpose of the expedition was to trace or contact the Aula tinbe of "will-o' the-wisp butches", as one press 'scare-monger' had put it exultantly. Yet we had arrived sufficiently well equipped to tackle the treasure lake (or so we consultered) in case circumstances and our trans Andean trek took us within its easy radius.

To quote Ene's words as recorded by the American press "Though our expedition is purely scientific in purpose, we will, of course, not pass by the lake tradition has made one of the treasure store-houses of the world, without attempting to prove or districted with slone believed legend."

So that, try as we might to direct our concentration towards the senous aim of the expedition, it was difficult to avoid nevisioning heroic tries through mountain blizzards with our special equipment and a glittering return. Often we would discuss such plans in an affectedly disinterested manner but, it seemed, in no time at all, our runaway ideas were bordering

on the fantastic.

And so when driving back to the hotel, we were silent and very impressed with what had been seen and heard

When I haven't had my breakfast those things that directly content me assume strange proportions I still hadn't 'broken' what seemed to have been a very long 'fast' when the room boy, preparing to wheel my tranks into the hall, swore that I had

Early breakfast ordered without specification.—"Detaying temprano, a las test, para El Senor," is liable to consist of a limited number of rolls, and some coffee

Fortunately the hotel, being the right sort that prepared for the emergency of a coarse appetite, was able to cater to my hungry whims And I was still able to catch the "train boat"

No-not the boat train-"train boat" Or train ferry

It would be inaccurate to assert that this staunch old vessel was a spring chicken Those appeals from wood in agony may have come from the loosely, piled wharf, or they may

"Though 'river worthy'," the ferry remarked dismally, "my pension is over-due

It was with a resigned bearing that she withstood the scram bling over her wooden deck rails and suffered the casual dumping of tons of American provisions and luggage, with Indian children running more or less amok. But I hope they withhold that pension just as long as the wheels inside turn round There is wad of South American atmosphere pervading those decks, and the "journey across" has more colour to it than could ever be blended with a Manhattan ferry

The old boat must have groaned as she saw us approaching with our overloaded barrow of equipment We marched to the

"station" wharf behind it, spread out across the road

'Hullo-you away?" "Yes-are vou?"

"M hm-catching Pan American flying ship this morninggood luck!" "Thanks Say hullo for us to New York"

"Sure-in three days"

Our 'smoother-of many hotel menu-difficulties' left us and walked on along the front towards the Grace Line offices

Pan American and the Grace Line are allied

Timber creaked and heaved as we moved away into that muddy, vine strewn River Guaya Away from Guayaquil, directly away, towards Duran on the other side-

The few Americans going up-country, moved from the 'circus' in the innards of this ark and grouped with us towards the stern of the starboard deck, some staring without seeing over the wide wooden deck rail, some leaning, backwards against this rail, propping themselves lazily with their elbows

Most of us had met in some Guayaquil pavement café, or at some consulate, hotel restaurant—or elsewhere

Yet seemingly our talk had been small for we now discussed with a certain assumed earnestness the individual reasons that accounted for finding ourselves on this deck. We looked ahead We explained why we were in Ecuador We exchanged personal hintones: We histened

"Covered all this country, all the West Coast," volunteered the agent of a Californian film company, 'weighing' a sub-standard size ciné-camera up and down in his hand

I thought he had meant that he filmed likely backgrounds for his company with this camera. It appeared not He rented films to the interior of Ecuador, and other Andean countries

What cinemas would they have? How wild is it "upcountry"?—I wondered I looked at the tangled embankments of this wide river, and again at the creepers, floating lans, and branches that were coming from "up there." So beyond all this there were

movies----

Then 'Of course, in Quito?"
"Not only in the capital," had been the reply

There was the rancher returning just a few stations up the line, then "all of sixty five miles by hoss"

"Small, but I'm putting some by Then maybe Pennsylvania —see my daughter——"

"Then what?"

"Well now, I just don't know Maybe I'll duft back this way-"

"Oriente? Uh huh, they say it's a bad place How do you mean "contact the Aukas", got machine-guns? No? Fella from this line retired away in there. Won't come out Couple of others have gone in, heard tell they're living native Woman botainst went in there few years ago 5he came out. Course I don't know how far she went in—"

"What do I trade? Oh, I just trade, buy, string sandals mostly, send them to America"

"Sounds all right Do you make a profit?"

"Sometimes not Depends what I can find in the country that they might like back home"

"Like it here?"

"Not much, no I don't-"

"Jobs scarce in your part of America?"

ror some

"If you don't like it, why ?"

"Pop likes the idea—he prefers a gap between us—"

Which reminded me that Australia used to be, and probably still is, the dumping ground of black British sheep (possibly the indirect reason for that familiar Australian factory placard, "No Englishman Need Apply.")

Telepathy or coincidence, for the conversationalist in the

group brightened with

"There's an Australian gone Oriente as well, name of Kan garoo Brown Knew him some fifteen years ago Been in

And gradually we understood that a number of people had not only penetrated, but were living in this *Orunte* which we had come to explore

"But Quito gets news of bad killings there

So there was foundation for those American press reports

Soldiers in light well washed khaki ("Those rifles? Czecho-Slovakian," suggested an American), paneake hatted priests in black and miscellaneous sight seeing natives, completed the odd assortment of humanity which piled in and out of the waiting train

An advance booking had secured us Observation Car seast This "Car" was a short carriage with swivel lounge chairs and it was, of course, coupled to the rear of the train At the "tail" of this carriage was a small partly raised platform with space for a couple of fatalists to cling tightly There were no Ecuadorians in the Car" on this particular trip, and the complement was entirely non Latin

"Periodicos—El Telegrapho—El Dia—El Universo——"

These were national newspapers which we bought in an attempt to keep our finger on WORLD AFFAIRS, but our pooled Spanish vocabulary enabled us only to recognize a word here and there So they were folded again and we sat in these revolving chairs and waited for the train to move, meanwhile

squirming to the respective positions calculated as most comfortable for the trip

But—despite the drawn out exhalations of the husky little engine and the wisps of steam that spread the length of the train—nothing happened So that we stepped out again and moved between the groups of squatting Indians, sellers of rings, and baskets which successfully tripped people like ourselves

It seemed that this snorting little steel bull-dog which was to take us "up there" was waiting until the carriages were looking the other way. Then, by the expression on its face, it would make a studden getaway, with the rest of the train awakening to the fact too late.

This was very nearly the case. The jerk was sufficiently section to sever any normal coupling. But in a monient we were swiftly dawn away from the last hovel and gathering speed the train swept up the line through the greenest and most tropical looking fields.

With each collection of sheds marking another "station" the same vendors appeared with their sliced pineapples, their poured out drinks, their oranges, roasted bananas, ringed bread, their white toffee, and—what appeared to be suspiciously like an over size in roasted rats

We sampled some of the 'doughnut shaped' fried bread It had a sweet taste and was attractively, though unintentionally, decorated with finger prints, hairs and minute specimens of the country's geological strata Bamboo doints, cattle, as cleaning with perhaps from banana trees and a similar number growing papays, and other clearings cultivated with both these fruits for as far as the eye could see, sweep by the 'observation' windows, to be substituted again by matted walls of jungle.

We stared at this wild looking foliage. None of us commented upon it but we realized that the job ahead was not to be as surmountable as we had confidently considered in the easy comfort of that New York hotel. None of us had taken the "green hell" articles very senously, yet to the very edge of the tailway line grew "impenentable wilderness" appearing to correspond exactly with the vivid "write ups" in the American "columns"

It differed from the jungles of Celebes, Java, Sumatra, and Malaya, in fact the forest countries of the Dutch East Indies, with which I was slightly familiar. Here were tropical growths ten times as coarse. Never had I expected anything like this

Sometimes the Observation Car would swing from the tangled green lianas and giant weeds to a field of long grass, crisp, warm and moist. These fields were so luxuriant that I found no reason for the scragginess of the mules and donkeys which were being ridden through them exceptions. I saw some very fine animals

Every sturdy puff of the little "monster" hauling the carriages after it suggested power and we sped upwards through the forest country until we reached Bucay, after several halts amongst the wooden shacks which constituted another station. Here again was the same bawling, the same pleasant chatter of "Spanish" voices, the same cries from the women with baskets—cries which, though Greek to me, were by now quite familiar.

Things were happening at the head of the train. There would be more jerks—a run back of a yard or two. Similarly we would run forwards, then stop. I looked along the train Two engines? Why?

As I have said, we had reached Bucay We were preparing for big things—to really climb——

"In-jump to it-we're away---"

Supposing somebody was to slink up behind you in the calm that overhangs Kensington Gardens on a Sunday and loop the leg of you "park seat" to a team of lashed horses. An extreme simile? But the 'effect' of such an event would closely parallel the surprising manner in which we were again jerked on rusy up the Andes.

Up, up—we were speeding and climbing the foliaged face of the casion A silver river wound below and thick jungle still grew close to the rails Yet not quite as green as before The sensuous warnth—the topical lethargy which had enveloped the 'Car' was noticeably giving way to a chillier atmosphere The comfortable stupor left us and we began to rub the backs of our hands.

'Yep-close it-the air is biting my spine-"

Up, up, cactus, shrubbed ravines The jungle was again here, but less tangled

"Cool-why it certainly is-

We reached Huigra

"Yes, but we haven't begun to climb yet--"

We knowingly regarded this American with stupid smiles But not for long. It was not a long way to the 'Devil's Nose'. It waited for us

"Yousah, we go thataway—right up there," slanged a jawning traveller

Through our eyebrows we took in the line zig zagging away up the precipitous face of rock above

"But for an American named Harman you would have had to get out here—"
'Harman? What——?"

"Harman thought it all out-went to work with imported

negroes "
"Was there anything special about the job?"

"I should say Take another peek"

We "pecked"

The lines running up the precipitous mountain wall were vee shaped. The track seemed odd. It was apparently without curves.

"Like a series of broken rails

'They are 'broken', yet, of course, connected "

A dead end in the valley which was almost all rock Behind the Observation Car a set of points were switched. The train backed up one of the "Devil's Nose" tracks

We walked to the doorway at the rear of the train and stood on the small platform as it shunted up the line Another dead end, more points When the engine had passed them, they were switched as before and the train moved forward again, 'shuttle cocking' up another gradient across the face of the mountain.

More settlements More shacks and mud huts It was de cidedly cold At each halt passengers poured from the train Good business was done by the guardians of 'spitted' and roasted pigs At Alausi, "Botanical" Peter bought a lariat.

"La riata fuerte compran la riata

The Indians dressed now in coarser clothing Some wore llama skin 'chaps' on their legs Most of them had a stiff basin brimmed felt hat and a 'pancho' A pancho is a blanket with a slit in the centre through which to poke the head Its four corners invariably hang to the knees of its owner who is usually not much over five feet Panchos are bought by the majority of people in Ecuador Later we wore them ourselves in the rain and chill of the Andes

On we slid, still climbing There were less cultivated patches and more sandy 'paramos' The chilled winds felt near freezing point, but I expect that the quick contrast between the warm jungles below and the bare wastes of the Andes made it seem colder than it really was When we reached Palmira Pass-the "top"-we had climbed over ten thousand feet

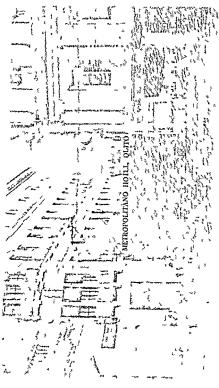
From there onwards were sandy wastes-an occasional 'hacienda' in the distance, an oasis in a wind swept desert of very few shrubs

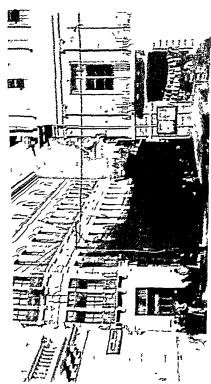
We began to slowly descend From either side of us ranges of the Andes ran away into the distance Then we saw ifwhite and magnificent—rising from the hills ahead of us, to the clouds Chimborazo, the highest mountain in Ecuador, once successfully climbed by Whymper and a companion

As we drew closer to it, the sun sank lower, leaving the hills in shade and Chimborazo in dazzling brightness. Then later as the sun really began to set and lights glowing up one by one over a wide area betrayed a township ahead of us, Chim borazo became a ball of red fire And now a final reflection from the sun tinged its western slopes a soft pink until finally the shadows closed upon it and its tremendous white form filtered only dimly through the dusk

The rails curved away from beneath it and in a wide sweep approached the dam, uncertain lights of the township We

slid slowly, between houses, into Riobamba





## CHAPTER M

DOES one merely "roll down to Riobamba"?

If Riebamba translated meant "pandemonium", I should say

"yes"-very definitely "Yrs"-

It is a pandemonium of which the traveller is conscious when the first pair of bare legs obscure his window view of a raving, chattering assembly storming the carriages Indians on the sides, Indians on roofs-how it was that I never saw a peon squished by several hundred tons of train still confounds me when I dwell upon the subject. In contrast to the railway terminus at Riobamba, the Bastille has a placid history

And what would be your reaction if six whooping Indians were to pounce upon your several miscellaneous possessions and depart with them, in six different directions, at speed?

Probably the same as my own which was to pursue the case carrying my razor and toothbrush, hoping for the best in

regard to the remainder of the luggage

My quarry, when I found him, was raiding another carriage, with my case under one arm Seeing me, he skipped out with further plunder and, shricking, leapt across the square No further remnants of my baggage crossed my line of vision so I took up the chase

The pursuit led to a dejected looking hotel I read the name of it It was not the 'Metropolitano" where our residence had

been guaranteed

"Where-is-the-Metropolitano Hotel?"

"Este bôtel es muy bueno, senor "

'No thank you-anyway I don't know what you are talking about-where is the Metropolitano-Metropolitano-Hotel METROPOLITANO---'

"Verga no mas, señor-venga por aqui-los cuartos en este bôtel son lindo-el comido es bien-"

"I said Metropolitano-where is it-donde Metropolitano?"

In time I actually arrived there having led my boardinghouse tout half the way by one ear. After that he led me The Metropolitano I found at the top of the square beside the station

The others had already arrived. I could only assume, in the words of a distressed American traveller (who had enjoyed similar athletics around the town) that "everything happens to me"

I was better off than this tourist—all my luggage had mysteriously arrived at the hotel.

It was chilly outside. After the warmth of the Coast, we thought it icy. The small stove heating the hall-way of the Metropolitano was a good sight.

Walking over to it we managed to perform the contortion of "thawing out" our feet and at the same time waving off-handedly at various uncharted areas on the map of Ecuador behind the bench, against which we leant.

It was then that we met Hank. Of course Hank wasn't his real name, but it will suffice

Hank had been notified that we were coming. He had been

asked to give us a hand—to make the hotel bookings—
I should say that Hank had seen seventy Xmases—yet he

was as agile as a grasshopper, with a languid yet vital tongue.
"Al doesn't appreciate Hank," remarked 'Botanical' Peter

the next day when we had listened to a great deal of it.

"One of the real old-timers—Arizona veteran—hell-fire," continued our Peter, with a pitying glance in my direction

I have seen a lot of "Westerns"—my appetite for them having arisen from my ownership of horses in Australia and time spent around "stations" in that country. And in most of the "Westerns" that I can ever remember having seen, there has been a character just like Hank—"hell-fire"—tobacco-chewing—eight notches—a man who held the spittoon distance record—

So that Hank although grand company, seemed to me to be a very familiar type. Yet apparently the Hanks of the screen are not as rare as the real thing. For Botanical' Peter goggled wide-eyed and occasionally indulged in what he must have considered the appropriate "Western" gesture of sliding his cartridge-laden "Sam Browne" (we were still in Riobamba) several times about his middle—at the same time making spectacular adjustment to his newly-acquired sub-armpit holster

Peter had wasted no time in climbing into his hob nailed knee-boots

"This-is a tough town," he had observed, gazing around, intently, for adventure

I doubt whether he held to this opinion for very long To even the most adventurous, Riohamba can be no more than what it is—in short, a pland, almost deserted little cobbled town of the Andes, except for three days in the week when the trains arrive from Guayaquii and Quito, to transform the strance silence of its station and hotel square, into a bedlam

When Hank was not describing his participation in the wars of Cuba or displaying his private arsenal, he was bringing to us the interests of Riobamba

The sack factory, where we watched shuttles with very open mouths—the shoe factory where Peter ordered another carturdge belt—the site of old linea ruins, where picking at chips of clay pottery we decaded that we were about to shake the misseums of the world—

We enjoyed the pleasure of "tea"—frequent teas—with a very pleasant American couple, on their estate in the shade of imported eucliptus trees. Peter having turned lepidoptenst on the Isthmus of Panama, speedily wove large scale plans concerning cyanide jars, when tray upon tray of impaled Onnut butterflies were brought to him. The rest of us goggled at fish-shaped Inca oil lamps (termember the "fish god" of Tumbes?)

—41 Inca water vessels of other shapes—at every indication

that we now trod in the land of that ancient civilization.

We tasted creamy cheese in the buttery—we rode a horse

and a Galapagos turtle-we outstayed our welcome

"Colour" is the one word which really describes the regular Sunday market in Riobamba. At this market best panebor are worn by the peons—new "Panama" hats are balanced on top of old.

Business is transacted over blocks of frosted ice brought in relays from the snowline of Chimbonano.

Live-stock causes a great deal of animated barter-it is not an uncommon sight to see a sheep, goat or rooster, as the victim of a tug-of-war between two peons.

It seemed to me that the women carried out most transactions-the men being never very far from a chicha stall where they would squat-drink-pass out-revive, and drink again-

Then would come a gap until the wives acquired more "centavos". And in this way they (the descendants of one of the greatest civilizations of the world) spent their Sundays

Chicha can be either a food or a drink In this case it was a drink brewed from corn However, more about chicha later on

Callousness is the middle name of the Ecuadorian peon Animals are dragged to market with as little idea of the humane in the mind of their owner as it is possible to conceive

Why not drag them along the streets on their back, he argues Why bother to lead any animal along, if it is bound to plant its feet between cobbles and offer resistance?

A bit simple, these gringes, the peon tells himself And you become the object of his insensate pity

The women appeared to be the worst offenders and it was in Riobamba that I have been closest to handing a female the "KO" as self-appointed representative of the RSPCA

A frothing hog slung across the razor back bone of a burro half its size A lamb being hauled along by a rope attached to one foreleg which had subsequently broken Clumps of fowls being jerked about and swung on the end of a string, their heads hitting the ground with every motion of their owner

One could not become hardened to these things as one could to, for instance, the goriness of bull fights The cruelty was unbelievable Surely these peons must have some feeling, I would argue

"How can they—they are animals themselves" This appeared to be the truth

Several times in my life I have played cricket with a team against lunatics The reason being that the model asylum, of that part of the world where such eccentricities took place, had the best "oval" of the town, and the "loonies" had a good team That it has had lasting effect on me, will, no doubt, be exultantly claimed by friends who read this Yet only in that asylum have I ever seen such insensitive manity as is found on the faces of the peons of Riobamba

These people are the beasts of burden Ask any Ecuadorian whether he would rather have a donkey or a peon to carry his load Invariably he will choose the peon as being the "animal" most cavable.

The American couple, who had produced for us Inca pottery and an amazing collection of butterflies, invited me to "see more of Ecuador" from their "model T" I at once accepted

"Stands up to it well," I remarked as the car jumped from one small boulder to another on a barely discernible mountain road

"This? Smooth open highway compared with what is to come-"

It was an accurate forecast

Yet how does this car-any car-get away with it, I wondered, as we drove westward still further from Riobamba

If having to scrape a rock wall to avoid a hurtling "Heath-Robinson" contraption packed with Indians, is not adventure—if risking a two thousand feet dive to avoid head-on collision with a similar wheeled community is not disconcerting—if being confronted with the appearance of a herd of sheep and three loaded liams whilst sweeping around a natriow unbordered track high above ravines is not exciting—then our journey to and over the chilly twelve thousand feet pass was uneventful.

On old American chassis, in the Andes, can be found surely the crudest form of wooden passenger-carrying "cages" scen anywhere Crammed with humanity—poultry—and perhaps papayas, these extraordinary vehicles are set in motion by widd-grd dooling Indains. With hysterial recklessess they cling uncertainly to the steering-wheel—plunge precarnously along precipies—pull at loosely wired throttles or ting a sticking clutch back into place. Usually they don't attempt to brake, leaving what fulle they have of this control for the more adventious incidents. Most horn'tying of all, they are in the habit of changing to neutral and "switching off" when about to charge down a decline. This, of course, is to save

petrol. Did most of these 'infernal-machines' possess brake linings? From their down hill speeds I was sure they did not. The subsequent screeching clatter of "tortured" gear-

boxes was to me little short of sacrilegious.

On the "Pass" the "Model T" groped its way through cloud—our bones ached with cold—and we wished for overcoats that were elsewhere. Llamas, past whom we chugged, in the charge of cholo drivers themselves furred in llama skin, gazed at us in their warmth, and mouthed reflectively.

The car descended again to the comfort of sun-heated valleys. Whitened mud houses, the inhabitants of which appeared to spend their time inspecting each other's heads, cluttered the hillsides Small farmed guileys, from which the Ford would climb again to show us Chimborazo's shuning peak, repeatedly "switch backed" the "roadway", as well as cultivated valleys which could have fitted easily into many countries of the Old World

On we would bump, over rocky tracks, over rock-strewn toads of soft dust.

Already I have intimated the narrowness of some of these roads—some—for others were wide cuts through a dark silf-like sand, bordered by thin high trees—cactus—and prickly pear.

Finally we reached Guaranda.

Here again was the usual big square—two sides of which had been converted into a minor market.

"Saspadilla . . . mula carambal . . dulce . . . saspadilla . . . belada

These words, despute the florid exclamations of the cholo

upbraiding his mule, for the most part fell pleasantly on the

The vivid coloured cloths on the stalls suggested props of an "extravaganza show" and in Piccadilly would certainly have held up traffic.

But in Guaranda—as I found it to be in all Ecuadorian towns which I visited—these stimulating flashes of rich purples—reds—greens—"toned up" and "glamourized" an atmosphere which on "non-market" days must lean towards drabness. Every day in such towns or near them, Indians and thelos (half breeds) can be seen jogging through dusty roads in faded handbos which originally bore such high colours

But in the rains of the Andes, in the frequently damp allnight treks to and from market, and in the dust of the highways in which their thinks sodden owners choose to reel, the richlytoned dives fade and quickly wear away

Yet even the faded cloths and panehos greatly stimulate the

beauty of the already amazing spectacle that is Ecuador
I loitered to buy some "bandarnas" Even further purchases

caused no comment. I might have been one of the hundreds of Indians filing in and out of the market in their rimmed basin hats "Helado dule senga senga"

"Helado dulce venga venga "

Everywhere a "honeyed' Spanish—none of the noisy chatter so eyident on the Riobamba railway square.

Guaranda was a quiet, sleepy town

Its market was conducted in almost the same serene orderly manner, as the business done across the rural counters of the few general supply bucket shops, which we visited

In these stores had we chosen we could have bought torches
—cloth—pick-axes—chocolates—German beer—cartridges—
wire netting—

My hostess contented herself with a pound of white toffee, sold in inch thick chunks Despite the fact that we had exhaustively princed each article of the entire stock, not even the Ecuadorian who, with urbane seriousness, dropped finger fulls of the "candy" on to the scales, seemed to sense the oddity of the purchase

Trundling downhill from the main street of Guaranda, the Ford headed east back towards Chimborazo—back towards the Riobamba from which we had been separated by many a small mountain gorge

Though it takes very little to tempt my bile away from its routine stamping ground, I joined in the munching of the sugared purchase, at the same time inhaling the mountain air that napped in under the roof of the tourer. It was very invigorating and after the sleepy toopor of Guaranda our heads felt clear. Yet we passed poor devils less fortunate lying along the roads with their wives standing over them. Chichal

Once again we crossed the 1cy pass on the paramo of that high range separating Guaranda from Riobamba and subsequently approached Chimborazo, as the setting sun tinted its cloud topped western slopes that familiar deep pink

Then the clouds lifted.

"Twenty-one thousand feet of sheer beauty," commented my American hostess

One week after our arrival in Riobamba, as the afternoon brilliance of the sun again softened Chimborazo's slopes, the

town began to liven up

To-day this tri weekly animation had a difference Enc was arriving with the four other members of the party So that from our point of view this meant that "things" actually nere about to begin

The usual show

Running feet-very occasional laughter-cries from peon salesmen—encouragement to unco-operative llamas (there for no very apparent reason, although probably to be 'loaded' from the train)-irresponsible taxi-drivers clattering around the corner on half a wheel—their raucous touts—peons sitting on the rumps of dejected looking burros who pattered across, head to the ground with an air of unhappy resignation—the metallic slap of iron shod ponies—the soft "clap-clap" of those less fortunate

All these things shook the sleepy cobbled square—whilst conversation, shouts and vendors' cries in Spanish, around the half-open terminus beyond, intimated that at any moment the

Guayaquil Quito train It drew in with the usual free riders (who congregate for the purpose three hundred yards up the line) chinging to the carriage sides-the roofs-the platforms-

"Hullo, Sonny-hullo, George"

"Alasdair? I'm Catl

"'Lo, John-cat's whisker all set?" "Eric? Tinkering with luggage"

'HI, there, Mont-Peter-

The Expedition-more or less en masse-

## CHAPTER XII

PREVIOUS to the arrival of Enc's party from the coast, Mont, Peter and I had disconnectedly spent our "non nightsceng," moments filling liquid compasses, polishing leather, taking "without a tear" Spanish lessons from the manager of the hotel and othing guns

Pete and I had floundered frequently in a sea of navigational thetoric from Mont, who had laden himself with a Mercator's Chart and some profound astronomical literature

When the trains had deserted the town I sometimes wondered if there could be a more disconsolate place than Robamba. To kill time we made a habst of visiting "EI Pelapure" for the daily erasure of hirsute growths or sat on beds calling the room boy, to test our newly-augmented pseudo-Spanish.

Peter, well under the power of the lipschipters, studied glass ash trays locally decorated with butterflies from the Orient. The seed had sown when he had solo'd into the Panamanan wilderness between Christobial and Bilboa and now membran ous winged insects pervaded his nocturnal fantasies. To counteract this he read a book on sharks

On the morning following Enc's arrival we rose with an unshakeable conviction that more concrete occupations were about to supplant our sciolisms of the past week.

But not every part of a jungle expedition can be arranged in a New York Hotel Reorganization, when you "arrive on the spot", is inevitable It was possible that well-intentioned helpers, whose rural experiences had probably been limited to morning walks in Central Park, had cheeffully thrown in expedition soap and toothpaste with the rubber boat. The dehy drated vegetables might have been harmered down with the film cameras. We didn't know

Everything possible had been done in New York to avoid

a contingency such as this Yet it was inevitable that the boxes should be opened sooner or later and repacked And there was another obstacle to progress

Practically every member of the expedition, with the exception of Eric, began to display chameleon tendencies and a reluctancy to get out of bed

For a week this kept up My interior mutinied with the stomachs of the rest of the party when a little Macleans might have put us on our feet Despite the fact that the hallucinations accompanying this particular illness conjured disturbing visions of Indian carpenters hammering long boxes and Eric telegraph-

ing next of kin, nothing very much happened except that we changed colour For it was only biliousness

South American food is most palatable, but somehow different to our own One afternoon, during this period which we called Black Week, when the intestines of four of the party were being initiated, John the Radio-operator came into the patto with his ash-coloured hair on end, remarking that his room harboured something that resembled a ghost But John's hair was always on end It grew that way

Yet we decided to investigate his claim George of the "supply department", by profession an aeronaut-cum-New-York restaurant manager, looked very yellow as he blinked dismay over the sheet of bed number two in "Sparks" quarters

Later John advised us to look again and see something "that couldn't happen twice" It was still George in bed, but this time the distressed face that stared at us was green

"Boy, how those Georges do change," chaffed someone "Push his head through your red sweater and I'll get my

colour film," from another

George forced a martyred smile and looked as if he badly needed a padre. I am afraid that a general guffawing represented the extent of our sympathy

We resumed our packing Half, in fact most, of the bedrooms at the Metropolitano are built around the stone patio, which is open and unroofed Spread about every part of it were our cases well selignumed with the mark of the expedition

Some of the "presents for the Indians" laid out beside the

boxes must have included several thousand articles from Woolworth's stock. Many of them were later of such value to us that we used them ourselves

Scisors—reels of cotton, coloured to catch the nauve ejemirrors—penknives—rainbow balls of twine—steel-cutlasses and all those things for which an inhabitant of the Usper Amazon might offer his services were cased together and marked with sercial numbers.

Soon everything was relisted and again in shape. We now found that the Spanish dishes could be consumed without subsequent internal clatter. Life was very pleasant and the sun shone all day on the white slopes of Chimborazo which towered above the town.

Arrangements had been made, through the courtesy of a wealthy Ecuadorian, that we should use his high powered radio station for the amplification of our own signals

We drove to his estate one evening and conversed with the Expedition headquarters in New York. On one occasion when the "bottom dropped out of the ether", we were unable to establish two way contact with this same American station An enthissast in Connecteut chatted to us down his microphone offering to "skip around the corner to find a drug store with a "phone".

"He 'skipped'—found a 'phone—called our New York strong and arranged for conversation on a different wavelength For the rest of the time spent in Ecuador we wete in constant touch with New York Messages from our engine generated transmitters subsequently found their way to this more powerful station in the Andes on a special day every week. They were either helped on their way or were recorded and rebroadcast to America.

Conversation with New York by radio was actually easier and more coherent than by landline from Ruobamba to Quito Much as I enjoyed my stay in Ecuador, I do not remember spending my happiest moments with any of its telephones One could not just pick up the receiver, breathe Brown's focal number into the mouthpiece and expect his voice all within a few minutes.

For instance, this little scene-

"Would you have a boy call Señor Brown, please."

Then anticipating the incident to follow you make yourself comfortable somewhere near the 'phone.

Br-r, b-r-r-r-r-r, br-r-r-r-r, br-r-r-r

The bell "rings" with a dull muffled sound, like a midgetcar protesting at being cranked

"Hollah . . . hollah . . . "

Br-r-r-r-r, br r-r-r-, br-r-r-r-r

"Holla-a-a-ah . . ."

This performance is repeated eight or nine times until your fingers drum slowly on the chair

"Holla-ah-hollah-hol-ah, Central? Central, deme el trente quatro-hollah-Central, el trente quatro- Señor

Brown—Central—Central—Holla-A-AH, CENTRAL—Again the "Br r-r-r, Br-r-r-r-r . . . ."

Once more a repetition of the whole performance. The result is invariably the same——

"No contesta, señor "

"Would you know a harry tapir?"

The average Londoner approached by the above sentence, might be inclined to humout the speaker, excuse himself, and furtively flag an ambulance. But such a well-meaning gesture would probably be superfluous for the harry taptr is an established fact. Could the reader, however, describe one off-hand?

It was our 'intention' to supply such a creature to the New York Zoo which held no living specimen. Yet how many of us could have identified the animal from an unlabelled zoological assortment? Riobamba's Museum of Natural History possessed one—stuffed—

So with two others, I walked a few hundred yards down the cobbled main street to a palatial-looking building, one wing of which housed the collection.

The mounted specimen which we were shown was a small one, actually no larger than a giant hog and not unlike one. Yet its long coat and general appearance in a way resembled that of a black bear and, if you can mentally conjure such an association, you have the hairy tapir Of course any Natural History book or encyclopædia should tell you a great deal about the ordinary tapus, but his "hairy" cousin is rare, and is said to be only found above ten thousand feet. We ultimately encountered our first specimen at twelve thousand five hun dred

The museum gave us more than an intimation of Oriente fauna The various 'bush cais'"—the jungle 'inions', sleeke puma like aimals, and some of the monkeys, were new to me But it was the exhibition case with the Upper Amazon fish which held our attention. It harboured some nasty looking specimens. There were the 'ipramis' with their savage dogiteeth, it is said that they can "smell' blood from a scratch at a considerable distance—it is then "all up" with the owner of that scratch.

Here also were malicious "shovel rays", with electricallycharged ord like tails known to have killed children. There were electric cels—pugnacious looking frog faced mud fish a parada that resembled a breem and a general assortment of seemingly agreessive inhabitants of the Ornate tivers.

Then there were the birds. What a movre we should have if the prototypes of half this collection could be "shot" with our colour cameras. White condors, with formidable claws and a vice-like beak, spread six feet of wing across their particular stands! Swallows with tals a foot in length, rainhow parrots similar to the Australian "rosella", and macaws helped make up the complement of full deep reds, not blues and yellows And these against the tangled "green hell" background of the Oriente—

The show was very encouraging I wanted to get away at once for already we had marked time for two weeks in the too placed atmosphere of Ruobanba. But there was still work to be done and a species of cyclone enveloped the equipment in the hotel ratio most of each day.

Robamba's aur of desolation is really a mask Behind it campaigns are waged against Red propaganda to-the-Indians—industry hums in baenalas and fabricat, despite the South American attitude of "to-morrow"—and political enthusiasms run high

Once or twice I had occasion to step from the deserted

cobbled streets to the Army headquarters No "desolation" there, no mañana

Instead small groups in uniforms conversing earnestly together-heel-clicking and brisk steps from office to officetelephone bells-the tapping of a buzzer-altogether a furious efficiency tempo-

Yet Riobamba outwardly seemed dreary-depressing-

When the packing had been checked, it was decided that Sonny and I should go ahead and arrange a camp site at the hacterida mountain base, a hundred miles from Riobamba

How exultant we were to be the first away

When I met Sonny on a New York hotel roof, he had only just returned home from an "expedition to Thibet"

How, when, and where he had learnt about Enc's party, I have little idea, but he caught an express liner from China to California, an aeroplane across the United States and arrived in New York a day before I did

Sonny had discovered at Oxford that life held many accessible pleasures

His remark recommending the rear-seat, in over night trans-America skyliners, testified to this fact Until then I had known little about the air hostess

'Did you reach Thibet, Sonny?"

Sonny smiled He had just concluded a vivid description of Shanghai night life I felt that I knew just how far into the interior he had trekked From precarious positions on duffle bags which had been

balanced on equipment loaded higher than the driving cabin of the lorry, we watched Riobamba recede through white dust.

Then as the trunk rumbled towards the slope of Chim

"Sonny-life could be more complicated than it is "

"Too cold"

Wisps of chilled mist were brushing the thundering vehicle. Sonny shivered----

"My coat?' he quened, 'damn thing's in a bundle somewhere below-"

"De-pancho the driver"

Sonny did and felt warmer

"After Eric's show, what do you intend to do?" I asked him.

"Another, I suppose."
"Where?"

"O-oh, Thibet or-"
"But you've just been,"

"M m, yes---"

It began to drizzle Then came hailstones

"Press that pedal, driver, you've a cargo of martyrs—"

"Fabren Su schn-no, wrong again—the Spanish quick-"

Sonny split the rain with a wad of French

"Spanish, Sonny, unleash your 'Easy Spanish'---"

The hall now pelted at us in sharp pigeonegg chunks If ever I had needed in Ecuadorian vocabulary it was now There was to be no escape from the freezing bombardment and certainly no room for us in the cabin piled with packed instruents which already squashed the driver. There was no alternative but to lie full length along the bulky duffles, philosophizing, as our ribs threatened to frost, that most things have an end.

I fished for my "What you want to-say and how to-say it-

in Spanish", cloth edition, but it was elsewhere

"Foot dam, driver, repide—rerajade—reresjadanata—"
A hopful Soam proke into a humane of I tench Yet
how ignorant we were, with our minimum expension of rout
travel in that country. What need has there ever been to encourage an Ecuadonian driver to "step on air". Soamy and I
had been wasting our inatticulate un-Castillian breath when we
land struggled for the Spanish equivalent of "open that
throttle or else—""

Once across the "peak" of that sleet pelted mountain thoulder, one Laurel and Hardy predicament varied, and we plunged down chains sound perpendicular walls, and—at the uncertain equilibrium of our accommodium wavered—gazed glass-yerd down ravine walls of infinite depth.

"Well it won't be long aso-OW---"

"You're first, Sonny, unless you move this way."

"At this speed? Hub-if we ever get across it will be you hanging over the brink-"

The drizzle became warmer, it was almost comfortable. Fortunately no driven herds spread themselves across those cliff hewn roads and towards five in the evening, the lorry swept to the bottom of a valley and alongside a husky, galloping river. Force was the keynote of that rampant wall of water slashing at rocks and speeding heavily down the valley.

"It took the bridge," said the California-educated, gunpacking, check-shirted, ten gallon-hatted son of our Latin host. He indicated the broken ends of tough-looking beams fifty feet above the swirl.

Then he pointed over the water to an old American twoscater sedan, which he had driven down to a road-end, at the bottom of a cliff face.

"Just drove at over," he continued, "when the timbers gave. "Part of the road—see, that piece—broke away in front of the Dodge. We just slid out of that old bus at a gallop and finally made it before the track on both sides of the car crumbled into the niver.

"And were we feeling good? Into that water at floodtime and they finally pull you out, in the Atlantic."

"But the car-"

"Tackle and ropes and we had it up that wall like a rockspider-yep, it was a little heavy-"

A "little heavy".

The cliff face over hung the bounding river to a height of at least one hundred feet. Yet this off handed comment dismissed the matter easily, as fi it were part of bactenda routine to haul automobiles up and down Andean cliffs

The hactenda

Only in the distance had I seen one. It appeared that we were to be spared the necessity of locating a camp site that evening. We appreciated this for our clothes were still soaked

"Then with no bridge, what now---?"

"Everything goes over the taravita—on those wires—so will we—a truck will be down soon to load on the other side—"."

A small platform swung loosely from cables strung across

A small platform swiing loosely from cables strung across the torrent.

"This heavy stuff on that-how often do those wheels

"Oh, often---"

"Thanks, that's just fine-

"Driver-turn the lorry-it's Riobamba---"

"Those cliffs and all that sleet again?"

Our South American friend pushed back his sombrero.

"Say, aren't you explorers?" "There's a degree of uncertainty about that point."

"Don't you want to explore the other side?"

"Would we categorize ourselves as explorers Sonny?" "That's the way I described myself in the hotel register."

"Okay-let's cross. Unload---"

But already half the equipment had been taken off the lorry and peons were hauling the swinging platform towards us

The aerial trip was subsequently made without incident.

Unbarricaded cliff roads invariably assume their worst aspect when somebody else is driving. The three thousand feet climb from the tumult of water marking the valley floor particularly coincided with this contention.

Rain had made the narrow track about as slippery as it could be. On several occasions all hands disembarked to manieuvre this ancient automobile from some incredible broadside positions in the wet mud. The inky blackness of night, which had suddenly engulfed us, didn't help.

"Ever been over?"

"Yep-drove the truck off once-but not in a place like

this-" We concluded that "like this" meant another of those perpendicular drops, with which Sonny and I now felt sensitively

familiar. But that darkness. With a storm still undecidedly hovering in the offing, not even a friendly star flashed its goodwill,

The lights were feebly struggling to prove themselves diehards but the battery of the old coil-ignitioned car was ill. It tried hard. Sometimes we could see the road . . .

A light in the distance.

"Yep, fellers-that's it-"

The unmistakable sensation of cobble-stones beneath the wheels.

## I LEFT ENGLAND

A gap between two discernible walls. Passing through it, the car stopped.

We stepped out into slush and an aroma—an aroma universally associated with grunting stock.

An odd snuffling sound from Sonny. He had elevated his nose and appeared to be sampling what ozone there was.

nose and appeared to be sampling what ozone there wa
"Matter, Sonny—asthma?"

"Hogs," snorted that palated explorer of Thibet. Some stone steps; a figure holding a lantern.

"Fellows, this is my dad. He speaks only Spanish."

Our host-El Señor-

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## CHAPTER XIII

IN a cemetery, a midnight lament from that conversational parrot might have curdled the gore of any healthy man. But this morning it was merely part of the new scene

And what a morning l

Eye-dazzling sun on the white walls of the patio Sun sparkling as only sun can, on the not too distant snow cap A brilliant "white" sky hanging over blue hills and aggressive valley inclines And, as an introduction to all this brightness. midget sunbeam blimps cruised the big unpapered room from one open door to another

Immediately outside one of them was an impression of an

"English" garden and trees--

Through the other door beyond the wooden railings was a third patio veranda with its pigtailed Indian femininity, and again that parrot contributing to their chatter

A monkey climbed his chain and precariously balanced, grimacing on the railings. His sole occupation apparently consisted of unexpected dives at the tail of a tantalizing cat But cats have a few cards up their sleeves and a mone can look particularly unwell when it's plans are reversed-

Dogs barked, one especially emitting a cough suggesting the comments of a weary performing lion. Soft hoofs pattered on the cobbles A Spanish voice drawled a musical laugh from one part or another of the patio, whilst in my line of vision two images of Pochahontas fought to sabotage each others raven plaits

On a bed, not very far from my own, white sheets encased a carcase. There was not a stir from it. The owner was away ın Shanghal---

I looped folded arms over my knees and with them inanely scraped my hirsute chin It was not easy to start the machinery of Alasdair Loch into action, though perhaps it should have been. I could not go on balancing in the middle of my bed with such encouraging atmosphere and proximate sound effects. Yet we were guests—

But bed certainly wasn't the place and I groped for my slip-

pers with the anticipation of a pioneer.

That musical voice again and its pleasant laugh. Then——

"Perita—traega agua caliente para los señores----"

"Si, señor mia"

The weightier of the 'redskinned' young women dealt a parting slap to the other and was pursued around the wooden boards past my room

I had only just begun to experiment with the thick china wash basin when bare feet thumped back again.

No self-consciousness about that hefty young lady. She scampered through the door to where I was plastering soap

about my ears, her face drawn in protest.

"No, no," she rebuked seizing my initiated basin of cold suds and throwing it on to the garden, "tengo agua caliente para Uttad".

"Yes-well, perhaps I might afterwards but-oh, hot water

oh, yes—fine—pour it in——"

Her expression, when she had completed her mission, plainly

Her expression, when she had completed her mission, plainly said. "Now you can wallow."

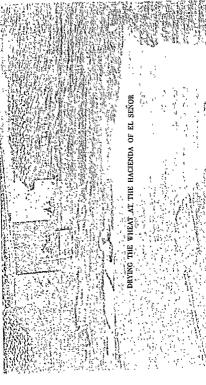
There is a rather blemished international poem which for generations has dwelt in the unsated minds of corruptive adolescents Fortunately, my memory takes me only to the first four lines They run.

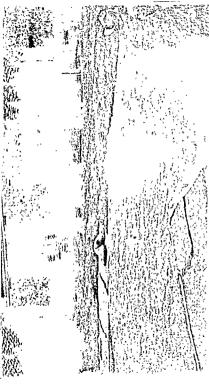
> "Cats on the roof-tops Cats on tiles Cats with their faces Wreathed in smiles . . ."

It was this literary effort of some erring bard which crossed my mind as I introduced my shaven smirk to the world of the bactenda patio.

Cats.

Cats fighting. Cats "not up yet". Cats clawing lazily at the air and rolling in the dust. Cats walking veranda rails and





watching shadows flashing across the blinding place above. Cats ...

Well many, many cats . .

No, I am not describing a Battersea catarium. The scene is still Ecuador-still a cobbled barrenda patio in the Andes-

Yes, there were eats everywhere and of every shape. I counted thirty, though I may have included the same one twice.

Five dogs alternately pranced and lazed about the yard and on the veranda steps. Near the steps two cows stood patiently anchoted to the railings

A thickly skirted Indian woman in a matured Stetson, took empty glasses, then placed them warm and frothing on a tray held by a minute Spanish Indian gul, with plaits. This little cholo's name, it appeared, was Carmen

Indian women in more "male" headgear and this anklelength attire emptied wheat from sacks on to a tarpaulin, obviously to dry it in the sun A mule hitched near the gateway in the thick wall across the

patto flicked its tail in early morning impatience, and a nearby single-shafted ox-care rested on its voke. Perched on a wheel of this ox-cart a chained monkey focussed a ray of concentrated sealousy across the wheat tampaulin at the other one still warring cats

Again I heard that pleasant languid drawl Another Felix smooged through a doorway followed by a tall handsome woman, with dark hair and eves

Why, of course-yes obviously, this was our hostess the Señora

And having introduced herself and inquired after the dormant Sonny, she smiled and quened "Pero, to quere desa-

I nodded-conjured my most sociable grimace and tried to converse. But only one or two straggling words of an Onental language came to me, so I backed away and dragged out Sonny

Between us we dissected the convenation of our hostess. My small "Collins" gave it-

Desayore-breakfast-

To the smiling lady, entertained at our delayed interpretation

we exhibited little doubt that we indeed were ready. And no sooner had this breakfast arrived, than it had gone again, but to the right places

As one of the expedition was subsequently to remark

"Mm hmm—bit of this Ecuadorian ultra violet—sausages, bacon, eggs and clips like those—raspadura syrup with these pancakes—wash 'em with a big cup of coffee"—he suited his actions to the remark—' then you've got something—vowsahl'

He too had been dismayed in Guayaquil at the accepted break fast of the country—coffee and rolls only—

Late rising usually meant breakfast with our host. Not that he rose late. In fact I doubt whether he ever spent more than a couple of hours in bed. A more intensive worker than any of his men he was usually away before the crowing of any ambitious cockerel. Several hours later his mule would clatter between the white-washed mud walls of the patio and cross the cobbles to be hitched near the steps. And Sonny and I would sit there in the half open veranda breakfast room, partly awakened and partly stupefied by the goodness of his board, whilst our host, surrounded by cats, conversed with us in Spanish. To begin with these conversations were inclined to be one-sided. I could count to twenty in my own interpretation of Castilian. Sonny similarly tongue-tied would break into French.

Suggesting that El Senor was "surrounded by cats" would

not quite convey the picture
Have you ever had ants in your— Well, crawling all over
you? You flick one off your knee, and another from your ear
Having dealt with quite a hungry ankle bite, your discoveries
disclose more ants and even ants again. Right, then imagine
yourself in the same situation with cats substituted for the ants

You still wouldn't like it? El Señer positively enjoyed the ascent and mp of every cat. And they knew it.

Then how many cast were there? Between twenty-five and thurty. A cat on both shoulders—occasionally one on his head —any number that could find searing accommodation were on his lap as one by one he would pick them off and put them on the floor. But the cass with all the good humoured guile of family-servants refused to take him senously and would parade the length of the table in readiness to scure a vacated part of his char——

It was not at all uncommon to have your breakfast explored and rejected before sampling it yourself, or to suffer a furry tail in your nostril when trying to deal with your coffee.

But the breakfast table was not the cat-sanctuary that it appeared to be. The animals seemed to sense that there was a limit to what they could do. That is to say all except one. An extrovert. A cat with no imagination.

El Senor's breakfast table was rustically arustic—and towards either end a floating boul with Andean blooms added that extra touch of colour—

The strange affinity of our host for his cats paled beside the interest shown by this special Felix in the bowl almost immediately opposite El Senor

A few more unexerted snuffs-jet another circumnavigation of the bowl.

Whilst cats cuffed each other over a coveted knee this one refused such an unprofitable waste of a meal time period.

A stroll up the table then . . . that bow I again.

Like a sneak-thief planning next week's coup Felix kept on sniffing—circumnas igating—purning—

The deadline came one lunch hour when our host supersung in the fields nearby had seared one of those infrequent opportunities to reach his "board" instead of delving into a staddle-bag. And now at the table the aroma of the barley soup wafted across his receptive palite. It's hot urging a mule up valley slopes, and barley soup.

"Butto-m-mm-nug bun-tungo bunbre-"

Lips smarked-El Seeer liked it-more barley soup filled his emptied plate.

"Ah, Mishu, payase

Not breakfast time. No time for cats now. One by one he picked them from his person almost anguly

Felix had studied the flower bowl for a week. He paused -rolled round again-then stopped altogether

There was something definite about him His face shone

with the appearance of a mind made up

No looking about him for the reactions of other cats No self-conscious "peek" to the left or right Felix merely drew alonoside the bowl

Not a great deal in common with William Tell Very few would attempt to compare the eye of this cat with that of sharpshooter Tom Mix Perhaps El Senor had more in common with

both these famous men It certainly seemed so

Felix's sights were obviously too far above the target Directly in line was not the bowl of Andean floating bloomsnot the table-not, as you might expect, El Senor-

But somehow our host's barley soup-

Did I mention that El Senor packed two guns?

The cholos picked Felix's warm body from the floor Barley soup and broken china splayed the patio where it had been thrown There were no cats in sight

On most mornings as the sun floated through the azure towards its midday point, the patio would be spread with the tarpaulin and covered with more moist wheat. Not just a sprinkling-but bags of it-a small desert of the heavy steam ing grain weighed heavily on the canvas And on top of it the Indian women made rhythmical movements with their bare feet, brushing back the dried parts and exposing wheat that had not seen the sun La Senora would frequently sit in the middle of this small desert, laughing and conversing languidly with the delighted raven haired pirls

Such a relaxation was invariably a prelude to lunch and La Senora usually stepped to the wheat after a busy morning selling supplies to the Indians from her small veranda store She made no profit and usually gave over measure. It saved the peons of the bactenda long all night trips to the nearest town They had little idea of money and in the manner of most tropical

races, were more inclined to mentally credit their purchases to a "floating debt"-----

This "floating debt" and what is known as the 'padrone system' go hand in hand, in Latin America and leave the way clear for unscrupulous exploitation of the native

Although many of their masters, such as our host, give them what amounts to more than just an honest deal, there are others who allow the simple Indians to involve themselves with unlimited credit and high priced purchases

Soon after the commencement of their term of service with such a master, they are up to their ears in a debt, which grows and is subsequently handed down through the generations

The wretched Indians, bound by a strong inherited code of honour concerning debts, and usually too simple to understand what has been going on anyway, find themselves virtual slaves to the bacands for which they work. And, of course, if the estate is sold, the Indians and their debts go with it

In South America tales filter through to the traveller of padmins lassooning their dismayed peons for the entertainment of guests, and galloping off with the wretched Indian bouncing in the dust of the horse's heels. There are other tales of hosts extravagant in their hospitality at the expense of the female Indian 'slaves'

But the peons at "out" harness were content. The regular Sunday payday, on which all mones without subtractions were paid to the Indians (who then had the opportunity of settling in part, if they wished, any of their debts) gave true evidence of the fair way in which our host ran his business.

On these Sundays there assembled more Indians than should have normally imagined worked within a hundred miles of the hamide Many, no doubt, brought their "in laws" and "to-be's", whilst others probably came from neighbouring states to join in any excitement that might be going on.

And it monkeys chattering—donkeys braying—peons bargaining for coloured clothes and cheep Japanese thirts—logs quealing—poultry, encouraged by what they heard, offering contributory noises—dogs barking—payroll calls, and a staged cock fight doa't constitute something that yeers towards excitement, then Sundays were queet. "Panama hats"—Ecuadorian of course—were for sale at prices which made their purchase really attractive. The splendid thought of being able to wear a new hat per day unfettered my extravagant inclinations and held me mesmerized near the stalls.

On such a day, in an atmosphere of similar "peace and quiet" an explosion occurred one or two yards behind me

A great many people have their bugaboo and I am no exception. It is almost a certainty that a sudden face-to face, high powered glance from an octopus in the same swimmingpool as myself would be fatal, but explosions don't often disturb me.

At first, through the powder smoke, it seemed that someone had sabotaged the chicken run But ultimately it turned out to be the sort of accident that is seen only once

The few Indians who own guns generally buy their own powder and shot in loose form and refill their own metal cattridges

Apparently a peon had packed his with its full quota of explosive, after which he had proceeded to ram the tight contents with the flat head of a large nail. To be even more original he backed the point with the middle of his palm and had held the body of the nail with bent finners.

Finally of course he rammed the powder too fiercely

The nail is probably still travelling The hole that he blew in his hand was beyond description

Before I could find a stack for the tourniquet which I even utily put on his arm, one of his friends drew a handful of coarse coffee from a bag and threw it into the wound I had never heard of this before It certainly delayed the bleeding The wretched victim sat with his hand dripping and said nothing—

The nail was probably a rusty one since there were several of the type about the patio

The man was a mystery He did not belong to the estate He stayed for most of the day and the wound did not appear to be infected

His purpose at the bactenda was never definitely proved Once before he had been caught stealing supplies

## CHAPTER XIV

DESCENDING that precipitous trail was like riding on a Giant Dipper. In a sunny stupor we rocked about on the horses with thoughts that floated between peaks and blue-hazed ranges. The animals took the inutative and in the lethargy produced by the warm atmosphere of the valley we were sleepily unresponsive to their decisions.

But a sudden slide across the face of the volcance boulders dotting the mountain side, the twists and crevice plunges of the hazardous path, the frequent stomach loosening drops, when the horses decided on short-cuts occasionally brought un uncomfortably back to earth—sometimes too literally

Two thousand feet below our level the valle; curved into the distance and out of sight directing that winding Rio Pastaza where?

From sheer guesswork past the base of that black but snow-capped mountain That plunging river, we knew, could lead us through the greatest natural fortifications in the world

through those Andes with sheet wills to the tropical with Jans, colour and unknown, of the Orester jungle beyond. I have said sheet wills Yes, I was to learn in time exactly how sheet they could be. And that black mountain In reality a volcano, it disguised all appearance of ferocity under a heavy muntle of snow. Yet in 1919 pressure from within became too great and moited lava and punner rained into the Pasteas stopping its flow, deviasting the little town of Baños shown as the gateway to the Orante. And it was towards Baños that Sonny and I directed our thoughts as we heaved about in the armchair saddles and rode does not valley towards it. Baños meaning "baths", in actual fact they were medical springs said to cure anything from a heal selve to melian

cinal springs said to cure anything from a head sche to melan cholia. Billos another renders ous for the East and the West the farthest West that the East would come, and one of the unofficial eastern limits to more civilized Ecuador Baños described by Mary Blair Niles as the greenest village she had seen in Ecuador

The Pastaza valley represents geological strata gone mad, a loose conglomeration of volcanic chaos. Frequently it land sildes to the road which incidents are taken as a matter of course. Nearing the little town the valley narrowed into a deep gorge, so deep in fact that we afforded ourselves innocent amusement by dropping several stones together and watching them plunge on and on downwards, gathering speed yet never seeming to reach the bottom until, when we had counted slowly well into the teens, they would dash themselves to powder on the damp rocks below

Overlooking the little bridge from which we conducted these gravitational experiments stood a full sized cowled and canopied image of San Martin, holding a cruciffs. The effect was certain heartening to the traveller about to cross the little bridge many hundred feet above those tormented waters. It was inspiring, consoling, and gave sanctity to a fierceness which might otherwise have engineered thoughts of disaster and decression.

mid depression

Down that dusty, rocky main street with thatched mud huts on either side of us In the distance a cascade poured from one of the hills which formed the hollow called Baños

There were the usual small child nurses dressed like little old women with their thick skirts reaching to the ground, their uncombed hair, their melancholy expression, and their little brothers and sisters of a year or two younger suspended in a crude Indian shawl from their minute backs. These little nurses? 'could frequently have not been more than four years of age. Already they looked strauned and played out

Again Indians in pantles, bare footed, and calico-trousered to the knees, were the same yellowed basin hats. But these peons were different to those of Ruobamba, here that look of manity, that completely beaten appearance, was rarely to be seen. These people seemed almost happy, an infrequent sight amongst the Indians of Ecuador.

Perhaps these people were individualists Nowhere near

Baños had I seen a baneada or signs of the soul killing padrons system Pethaps these people were free or perhaps with the gateway to the Ormats jungles, representing two-thrids of Ecuador, at their doorstep, they drew confidence from the obvious opportunity to escape to escape if the slavery which had ensnated most of their people threatened themselves

And could the presence of hot and cold numeral springs have brought about any part of this naive gentality which occasionally flashed from one shiny face to another. It had originally been my impression after travelling the rounds of Riobamba and other markets in Ecuador, that peons and 'Lifebuoy' were strangers to each other. that even if an Indian had ally wigner is best friend, the latter never gave away that important hidden thought. It has always been my experience during travel that, after several days without the amenutes of a bathroom, one is more inclined to smile with a lather, than without So that perhaps our Indian friends did find their key to good-humour, in the bathrooms of Baños.

And what of these bathrooms?

Sonny and I now flaunted moderately successful Spanish phrases and with these managed to keep ourselves from being encouraged into the many connected water cubicles from which emanated a very slight departure from the sound effects created by occupants of bathrooms in New York and London Two disgruntled peons were dragged soap-udden and unsecing from their respective pleasure havens and we were invited there instead. When we declined in favour of the hot open pool the waiting queue rushed the vacated sheds, and the two that had been thrown out on our behalf appealed to us in protest, adopted a martyred demeanour, and finally washed in a gutter of the hot torrept that overflowed from the swimmung bath which we intended to try Water both hot and cold fell from a hill above the pool. The district is volcanic and whilst the snowline cascade is harnessed and diverted into one half of the swimming bath's controlled trap-tank, a fissure only half way up the mountain ejects a steaming flow which runs into the other compartment alongside the cold So that if the swimmers care to boil themselves they have only to adjust the flow of one or the other.

Sonny and I were quite fit We had nothing to cure except cramp from the many mile ride, and that went at once

So we plunged about violently until finally a too-comfortable toroor overcame us. I thought of boiled bully beef

Above one of the cascades, goats could be seen playing about the hill At one end of the pool Indian women were pounding and scrubbing clothes More people flopped into the bath Somebody altered the cold water flow control—

At one time in my life I had regarded a warm finish as the most pleasant extreme finale Yet shortly afterwards, when I heard a crab squeak on being immersed in boiling water, I placed certain reservations on this idea

Now I was ready to "squeak" myself There was no doubt about the rise in temperature

Then plunging across the pool to throw off that shrunken feeling, I was caught broadside on by a very hot stream from the 'tank'. My mind flashed back to a school-day thriller in which an Oriental had blandly glinted at a white man boiling in a cauldron.

Suddenly the hot stream found Sonny Or perhaps someone was killing a pig Ee-e-e-o OWI

We reached the side, and rolled gratefully on to dry land

Yes, Baños had a market!

The whole thing was there complete with chicha plus its watery-eyed imbibers, and the stalls of flaming colour. There were the usual live-stock, the inevitable bamboo flutes and dancing, and the strange concoctions for which the palate, if it is not Indian, requires much education.

All these constituents of the market were settled in front of church which in no way lacked attendance. Its congregation overflowed through the open doorway Squatting peons lazily pushed each other to allow an occasional veiled and mantillad felieure bassage.

My horse was clop-clopping a loose shoe on the rough road Where was a blacksmith? The little crowd who always follows strangers seemed to know They led us there and pushed him forward The blacksmith gingerly took the borse's leg, ued a rope around it and jerked hard Both the horse and I nearly fell on top of him After that I did the job myself

Our stomachs told us that it must be past midday. Then where .

"La Villa Alemana. señor "

The Villa Alemana was run by Mr and Mrs Von Hartrott, and run very well 'Their long veranda'd "colonial style" bungalow was a guest house, the acme of cleanliness, with well kept tables And I still have the recipe of their very special Whisky Sour which restored life from where it had been

boiled away and a temper which had been tried by a blacksmith These good people ultimately became very good friends of ours, and were responsible for nursing an English friend of

mine back to health from a very sticky illness

And above the guest house, above the hot mineral pool, above the little mud-hut village of Baffos, the black mountain towered with its white cap

"That is Tunguragua", they told us

No, the Villa Alemana had not been there when it had erupted and damned the valley But, at night, occasional showers of red sparks could be seen bursting from the top Yes, it had been fairly quiet for sometime But you never knew. . . .

After lunch we rode to the falls of Agoyan. It is really Agoyan which marks the Gateway to the Oriente, for here the Pastaza valley narrows and the hills converge to form a very one of the few places where a pass grave looking chasm . is found in the Andes of Ecuador. And to ironically bring us back to earth from the beauty of

this blue-green torrent pouring two hundred feet in the solid, concentrated way of molten metal, an internationally-known firm, whose special line, incidentally, is removing headaches, had slashed an over sized version of its trade-mark, in coloured paint. Beside it loin-clothed Indians "from inside" stared at us as we took in the phenomenon of all this unharnessed power.

Baños had seemed warmer than the rest of the Andean towns. We had been told that it rarely rained there But here beside Agoyan and the tattoo'd Oriente Indians the atmosphere had even further warmth. It had become moist. Ferns and

liana had appeared

Undoubtedly this was where East met West

It is one thing to refer theatrically to the Andes, over whisky sodas in a heated New York suite, and quite another to find oneself tucked away in a corner of the almost deserted world at their base

Odd feelings overwhelmed me as I stood listening to the roar, not just of the falls, but of Agoyan's echoes, the echoes of the atmosphere, the echoes of the occasional burds, the splashing, the occasional crumbling of rocks, the slight breeze All these sounds chased one another from the top and bottom of the gorge, from the direction of Baflos, from the fog layers being stirred occasionally by the eddles of wind It was like listening to an amplification of the story that a sea shell tells when it is held close to the ear

Sonny was off his guard and appeared to be impressed Usually his tense moments occurred when others seized upon levity Similarly he pointedly observed the ridiculous when others attempted to be profound. But this apparently was not one of those occasions.

The small cascades hurried to join the volume of water which hurtled to the Rio Pastaza's lower level 'The Pastaza in turn, sweeping out of sight around the cañon which cleft one of the world's greatest mountain ranges, rushed on to join the Amazon and it carried the imagination with it

Having preliminarily surveyed what we could of the expedition's intended trail, we could think of little else except what lay on the other side of the Andes, beyond this cañon which had allowed the couple of Oriente by standers passage to the west

Not only did the eyes of these two lightly-coloured, slightly clad gentlemen refuse to blink, but their mouths appeared hang permanently open. They carried baskets on their back Presumably they had something to sell. Although we didn't think of it at the time, it was possible that those baskets contained traintait, or shrunken heads. Quite a business is done between the inhabitants of jungle Ecuador and those of the civilized West, with these blood thusty objects. After passing through the hands of a number of middle men, they usually reach American tourists, who often find that they can sell them at a thousand per cent profit.

Trade reached a point where it was very good indeed and everybody commercially concerned in the deals was of course very happy until the Ecuadorian government found evidence to suggest that the Indians were solving their "mother-in-law" and "bête noite" problem the easy way, that in an effort to keep up with the demand for their commodity, the "factories" were creeping nearer and nearer to civilized Ecuador

So it was arranged that a fine of thirty pounds should be imposed on anyone found taking a trantsa out of the country

But the traffic still goes on

Sonny had never seen one Neither had I During our stay in Ecuador we were to be shown not just thruken heads, but a life size one only slightly treated. There was a certain amount of mystery about it, but the head had been acquired by it's owner as a gesture of affection towards the victim, who had once been his servant. There were two bullet holes on either side of the trantia.

We did the ride up that mountain switch back trail in stages. The journey back from Baños had been consummated at the bottom of the valley by a 'round up', which the helpless peon guardian of the two stray bullocks must have regarded as very unnecessary.

But temptation is a snake in the grass. It creeps up behind you and is just as liable to point out that you are riding in a real Mexican-cum Hollywood saddle, equipped with a lariat, and that those two steers won't mind a clean healthy run . . . as not

Could the written order for two five gallon hats which issued from the *banenda* a few days later, have been solely prompted by necessity?

This was in any case a colourful and theatrical country. The head gear was not out of place

At the third stage of the climb near the bacrenda road, a young peon projected dismay at a sack of fallen oranges, which were

still anchored, with complications, to a scraggy ginger pony String, which ran from the animal's tail muscles, had a dual use. It was also meant to keep the sack from dripping fruit. A piece of cord twisted around the load, put pressure on the beast's gullet, and wrapped once around its off side leg

Both peon and horse looked particularly unhappy

Then once again the animal stood loaded, this time without the disadvantage of the hill slopes. Its four feet were now planted firmly on the barrenda road. Sonny and I tore at oranges with our teeth

All might have gone well had the young peon not also decided to mount. His argument was that there was insufficient binding to keep the sack in place. He would hold it

Then the show began

The sack fell underneath the pony's stomach when the young cholo had pulled on r for support, and nuraculously hung there Both the boy and the animal sensed further complications The former waited for them, the latter decided on self-ex pression

A vision, alternately of hoofs and a boy's head, of the pony's head and the young peon's heels, gathered speed and disap peared around the bend Without much loss of time we mounted and cantered to the rock around which the trail twisted Several hundred yards ahead a cloud of dust sped towards our host's estate Yes, we could just discern them Ruder and horse had not parted, but Sonny pointed to an orange at the side of the road

At a small near by estate owned by an elderly zenera and her sister, we had arranged to meet a member of the family whose hospitalty we were enjoying. The day had been a full one We would both have preferred to return at once to the banenda which was in sight rather than add to our journey with this unfamiliar side trip.

This small estate was only occupied by its owners for two months in the year, we had been told

'For their health, or ?

'No, they like a little quiet whoopee,"

What "whoopee" could be had in these dilapidated sur roundings When we rode into the courtyard through the 'half light', it was obvious that there were no other horses there Everything appeared to be deserted Sonny became depressed Then an oil lamp arrived and another Yes, our friend had left, the peons told us, but wouldn't we dismount and call on their ladies, who wished to offer us a token of their hospitality?

We had no wish to be discourteous, yet we looked at one another Our thoughts appeared to coincide and Sonny dis-

gustedly muttered something which sounded like "Tea—hell" Then we remembered that these were friends of our host and

we dismounted to be led inside

The tide had been hot and fatiguing Sonny ran his tongue

The fide had been hot and fatiguing Sonny ran his tongue around his mouth

"Another Baños 'plunge' wouldn't be out of place," he said, "and-"

F "A Villa Alemana 'whisky sour'?"

"Ye-ea as let's get out of here soon "

Lights began to arrive as we waited in the shadows of the dreary, cobbled patio. A room became gradually illuminated as the lantern parade increased, the last man bringing a powerful spirit lamp.

This "room" into which we were shown was surprisingly ornate. Pictures of virgins hung on the walls, moderating an originally elaborate interior where lavish entertainment must have taken place in the past.

Looking at the chandeliers and the scarlet of the Old World chairs, I thought at once of Hollywood and all the kings Louis of France. Here was a fading ballroom of an apparently extravagant era, high in the Andes, and several hours from any critized town. What guests could have been entertained in those past generations, on the scale that this paling glory appeared to superst? Who could have entrained them?

Soon we were to know

The lights were supplemented. The room was now brilliantly illuminated. And suddenly two charming Spanish ladies came to greet us

They had heard and read so much about the Expedition—wished us every success—had the Capitan arrived yet—no?
—what a pity—it was their sole wish to meet him—

And were we really going into the Orient? It was strange that few Ecuadorians ever went. In their father's time there had been so much fever there—and dangerWe assured these good ladies that, with our medicine chest and equipment, this would not be the case. We hoped that they would "meet the "Capitan"."

Then perhaps we would drink to him?

A pair of American eyes beside me began to gleam. Sonny's expression had been gradually thawing, and now relaxed with good will, as our elderly hostesses of the moment busied themselves about some trays held by Indian servants.

"Now-you must try a little of this . . . and this . . . and

this . . . "

Sonny gulped; tears welled into his eyes.

"Why it's a man's drink!" he remarked, drawing breath, his face positively emanating pleasure, "never had one like it . . . damned hospitable . . ."

"Aguadiente," cooed the two ministering angels.

Aguadante, cooled nie two ministering anges.

Aguadante eact—quadante with honey—with scalding teaoguadinte (the translation is "teeth-water", presumably because
of its bite) . . . made from sugar cane on the estate—a
smooth, sweet and colourless drink—

We parted friends for life, and mounting, clattered over the

cobbles through the high-walled gateway, to the trail.

"What's that, Sonny?"

"Quiet 'whoopee'... I can understand those old girls now."

My belief that Sonny ultimately managed several subsequent visits to the estate, to my one, was partially confirmed one evening when I found a string of fire crackers, which had not

properly ignited, tied to the tail of my horse.

And as we rode back through the darkness, along mountain roads, a distant shower of sparks from distant Tunguragua

brought home the length of our day's ride.

brought home the length of our day's ride.
Yet that rumbling was not from Tunguragua. The "Black
Mountain" was more active this evening than we had ever seen
it before, but surely that bumping sound came from another
direction.

Pulling the horses to the side of the trail, we had just time to get out of the way as the bacienda lorry pounded around the

comer.

It bore Eric and company, with—amongst other things—sixteen boxes of Grapenuts——

## CHAPTER XV

"THE expedition will also attempt to locate a lake between the peaks of the mountain Cerro Hermoso, where, according to legend, the Incas buried a vast treasure about four hundred years ago."

So had commented the New York Times on the day that we sailed for Ecuador

To what treasure did it refer? Many times previous to my joining the erpedition I had heard the word "treasure" associated with South America's Andean territory. I had heard of treasures in Colombia and Bolivia as well as in Peru and Ecuador. What evidence had Eine that this particular buried hoard was not a delightful myth, a subtle anesthetic, perhaps, to be conjured forth on "quarter days"?

In order to appreciate his convictions that there was "something to it" we must survey a few historical facts

Ining to It we must survey a tew instoners like. Most records suggested, incidentally, that the treasure Encought was not South America's "greatest". It had never been held that this lesser Ecuadorna treasure included, for instance, the "Special Caravan of two hundred and sixty tons of gold, carried on the backs of seven thousand carriers, the ten ton golden chain that the Inca monarch, Hussyan Espac had forged for his first son Husscar, or the treasures of the Temple of the Sun". None of these glittening "visions" are alleged to have ever come within a thousand nules of Ecuador's treasure area, as they were instead conveyed from Curco, which less in South-Eastern Peru, to Cajamarca. Yet they all constituted part of the ransom for the life of the Inca Athualpa, which ransom the Ecuadonan hoard was intended to supplement

What is the story behind the conveyance of so much treasure? Why was the life of this reigning second son of the dead Huayna Capac at stake?

And this is where our friend Pizzero and his Spanish Con-

quistadores again make an entrance, one that was to finally and completely mark "paid" to this powerful South American CIVILIZATION

From an English point of view things might have taken a different turn if Pizarro had been brought up on the 'wall

game" or cricket

Atahualpa, under a flag of truce, had approached these strange aggressive people Why couldn't their demands be settled aniably? What did they want?

The Spaniards looked at the Inca, butchered his retinue, and threw him into a cell This betray al of faith was beyond the comprehension of the Incan code Atahualpa again and again sought a reason and eventually had it disclosed to him that the "need" of these blood-chilling armoured foreigners, who entertained themselves by quartering his people between plunging fblog

Gold The Inca king could lay his hands on a great deal of it He offered to cover the floor of his parallelogram shaped cell

with the metal in teturn for his freedom

All this took place in 1533 The chamber in which Atahualpa was imprisoned existed until a few years ago

Its floor measurements recorded at the time of the Conquest, coincided fairly accurately with those taken recently. The room

was found to be about nine feet in height

To the Inca's offer that he would cover its floor with gold plate, the Spaniards were dubious Should they take him seriously? Was such a claim possible? From where could the Indian produce so much treasure? Their hesitation was misinterpreted The prisoner raised himself on his toes and marked the wall offering to fill the cell to that height. With an attitude suggesting that be had nothing to lose, Pizarro, who was taller than his victim, scratched even higher and agreed that, if gold was brought in which could occupy all the space to that height, he would release Atahualpa

Despite the fact that the Incas used no money, their mon archy exacted tributes in the form of gold from the more dis tant colonies Their empire stretched approximately two to three thousand miles, and gold or precious stones flowed un ceasingly from its extremities, for the decoration of the palaces gus abres again make an entrance, one that was to finally and completely mark "paid" to this powerful South American civillation.

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D write the fact that the Incas used no money, their monar ist exacted tributes in the form of gold from the more distant tolonies Their empire stretched approximately two to three thousand nules, and gold or precious stones flowed unceasing in from its extremities, for the decoration of the palaces and temples To our modern ideas of architecture, these palaces and temples would have been crude, ungainly buildings, but their gold and silver interiors, set with emeralds from the section now Ecuador, would have turned our heads Few of Pizarro's present company had seen the glitter of Tumbes Most of them were inclined to discredit Atalualpa's claim, though they knew that much gold plate lay within the Incan Empire But Pizarro had not forgotten what he had seen on the coast. His prisoner was allowed to issue the command, for "more of the same"

Taking into consideration the fact that even with our modern methods of transport, we would use the better part of a day in merely temoving our persons from London to Corn wall, or several days if travelling by fast train from New York to California, we can realize that the summoning of so much treasure by the Inca was not exactly a lightning matter. The Spaniards, despite the fact that they had entered into a deal in which they had only partly believed, became impauent from the first. This impatience was beginning to have bruilar representations on the Incas when gold arrived and continued in a slow, but steady stream. A fairy tale of imaginative people was turning into actuality.

The conquerors clamoured for more They were not to be content.

Trouble began for Atahualpa when Huascar, his elder brother whom he had deposed, offered double the amount of treasure, as hown ransom. The Spannards decaded that as far as Atahualpa was concerned they had made a poor deal, and that sunce he had passed the word necessary to start the wheels of the gold machane, his further existence meant little to them.

So on the twenty minth of August, 1333, at Cajamarca, put him to death, first offering him the choice of an easy end (if he accepted the Catholic fasth) or, alternatively, a violent one Its said that he choice the former finish, having already seen much of the inhumanity of his captors. He was strangled at a stake in front of an open fire

A point to note is that the name of the padre who baptized him, and who officiated at his funeral, was Valverde Whether this was a relation of the Valverde whom I shall mention in a few minutes is vague.

So much for Atahualpa, except for the fact that before his capture he had been placed also on the throne of Quito, the present captual of Ecuador, by the death of his father Huayra. Capac, and that his mother had been a Quitan princess. Consequently during his appeal for gold a great deal of it must have been stripped from the temples of Quito and carried along the Andes, via that great monument to their civilization, which stretched to Cuzco—the "Ineas Way"—parts of which we were to discover later.

As I have already intimated people interested have occasion ally agreed that the treasure buried in the mountain ranges of Ecuador does not represent half the value of the already men tioned metal which approached the imprisoned Atahualpa from the south. This southern treasure has been approach from recorded knowledge of the contents of the temples, as being of not less than one hundred and sixty million dollars in value, excluding any precious stones. Supposing then that the lesser Ecuadorian hoard is worth only a quarter of this other, forty million dollars is not to be sneezed at. We considered it worth investigation

But was there any tangible proof of such a nest-egg? There most certainly was

Word very quickly spread of the death of the Incan monarch at the hands of the Spaniards If the Conquistadores expected the gold to continue flowing in they were wrong The flow ceased Just as abruptly the Incas whose empire had begun to crumble, had their wealth

It is a legend, and, to most Ecuadorians, a historical fact that metal on its way to Cajamarca from Quito was thrown into a mountain hollow which was ultimately flooded by a diverted cascade

But what evidence was there to support this story? Plenty! And here the name Valverde again crops up

Shortly after their conquest, some of the Spaniards settled to lives other than soldiering. One of them named Valverde matried an Incan woman and attempted farming

Apparently it could not have been described as an outrageous

success Furthermore, it seems that he was not one of those to benefit by the conquest, for he was badly off and for one reason or another was shunned by his compatriots

His position caused him bitterness and he was not happy. The knowledge of the wealth that had been near and yet so far caused him to frequently complain in violent outbursts to his wife. He would depict in glowing colours the things that he could do with money and outlined the life of ease and comfort that he would create. Perhaps there was a motive behind Valverde's disconsolate demeanour and fierce fits of active depression. Or perhaps the normal man's reactions to the realities of poverty were merely expressing themselves. In any case his attitude had an undoubted effect on his listeners.

No one appears to be quite certain as to whether it was Valverde's Incan father in law or his wife who led him over the mountains, across wind swept parame, past glacers and snow-capped peaks to the hidden Inca hoard, or part of it, but there is fairly evident proof that it was one of them, and that Valverde dud go on this trek to his evident gain

This penniless man with no visible means suddenly appeared as one possessing great wealth. Whatever his promises had been to his wife or to her family concerning their future com fort, can only be left to the imagination, but the fact remains that, soon after appearing in this aura of affluence, he disappeared and was next heard of in Spain living the life of ease of which he had dreamed and spoken so frequently

During his active days he made no attempt to explain how he had acquired his fortune, but on the eve of his death he signed a declaration confessing that he had tapped a treasure hoard of the Incas, in an Ecuadonian section of the Andes

To support this confession he drew up a guide to the source of his wealth and bequeathed it to the King of Spain, who immediately ordered that a certain friar should investigate the claim.

The Indians of the small expedition on this quest ultimately reappeared to report that the firar had been lost in the bleakness of the Andes A party was commusioned to hunt for both the first and treasure. It was subsequently unsuccessful in both its aims.

But the greater part of the treasure guide had been drawn up with fair attention to detail

"Placed"—Valverde wrote—"in the town of Pelileo ask for the farm of Moya, and sleep the first night a good distance above it, and ask there for the mountain of Guapa, from whose top, if the day be fine, look to the East, so that thy back be towards the town of Ambato, and from thence thou shalt perceive the three peaks of Llanganaus in the form of a triangle, the lake made by hand, the forest, and a clump of trees which are called 'the arrowe'."

These trees, he said, were to be the principal marks—leaving them a little to the left and going forward in the direction of Guapa

The seekers after the treasure following this guide, came without difficulty upon the wide morass, and upon the two small lakes which were called "Spectacles", having between them a point of land shaped like a nose, in front of which there was the plain, or sleeping place. Here it was necessary to abandon the horses.

Then they reached the great black lake which they had been ordered to pass on the left They descended to the ravine down which dished the waterfall, which in turn had to be crossed by a bridge of three poles, and upon the following day arrived at the day ravine, pressing forward to another sleeping-place, which was to be recognized by scattered fragments of pottery

From this skeeping place it had been possible to pass on to the mountain of Margatitas—or pyrites—of which Valverde wrote "I warn thee thou must go round in this fashion leaving it on the left band..."

But the accompanying hieroglyphic indicates that it was, on the contrary, to be passed on the right There the guide fails Beyond that mountain of pyrites "none have ever located

Abandoned mines were discovered, but the "runnel which is in the shape of a church porch" was never found. Neither was the "eascade which runs into the quaking bog on the right", that bog "where there is much gold, so that putting in thy hand what thou shalt gather up at the bottom is grains of gold".

And no one eyer reached the mouth of that tunnel which led to the treasure place of the ancients

Consequently the hidden riches lay, as far as could be supposed, where they had been last uncovered by Valverde, oblivious to the fact that men seeking them had penshed of cold and hunger on the wind swept parames of the Llanganaus

Thus guide was translated from the Spanish in 1877 by Richard Spruce, an English botanist Dr Spruce himself followed it, like the rest, as far as the mountain of Margantai Up to that point he reports that the instructions "correspond perfectly with the actual locality—beyond", he says, "none of the remaining marks signalized by Valverde were to be found."

But he gives a reason for this In his opinion, the difficulty, which had prevented him, and other seekers, from picking up and tracing the further landmarks of the trail, was due to a misinterpretation of Valverde's indefinite chart and directions for passing the mountain. This had been the stumbling block to all recorded searches for the treasure

The late Colonel E C. Brooks of New York was not given to mental rampanetes. He was practical and a business man A graduate of West Point he had served the United States Army in Cuba. As representative of the American Banknote Company of New York City, he travelled throughout Latin America, spoke Spanish and knew the people intunately Known for his cautousness in dealing with and surveying proposition in hand, it is unlikely that he would have spent valuable time on anything which resembled a flight of the immentation.

Yet Spruce's account of his attempt to follow Valverde's guide interested Brooks. He decided to prove the trul beyond where Spruce had turned back. Beyond, in fact, the Marganian mountain.

Of course little was known about the route which he intended to traverse. His experience in exploratory work was limited. The time at his disposal presented itself during the part of the year when the weather of the Ecuadorian Andres was at its worst. His first attempt was a failure. Not properly equipped, derached with rau, and with a small party of closes whose knowledge of what to expect appeared to be less than his own, he realized that it would be foolish to go on

But in preparing for his second journey, he at least had a slight idea of some of the difficulties which would confront him. He was encouraged by the fact that landmarks on the trail had coincided with the written guide, and this he studied until he considered that he had reached a solution which would enable him to bass by the mountain of pyrites

So that at the end of the rainy season of 1912, with every thing as water proofed as he could make it, Colonel Brooks

began again

He found that his theory had been a good one In fact, it worked He was able to leave the Marganias mountain behind him, the first man since Valvende to have done so In the far distance he saw the "three snow capped peaks", which accord ing to the guide marked the hiding place of the Incan hoard. The chart became easier to follow, but the Indians hung back. They were superstituous and the thunder frightened them I might mention here that, from my limited experience of the Ecuadorian Andes, the only difference between the 'bad' season and the "good", up there, is that it rains and blows less violently during the latter. There is always thunder.

At the base of the conteal peaks the Colonel came upon a small lake as shown on the map Across the mountain valley was the "funnel in the shape of a church porch." But it was becoming dark. The Indians were again restless The thunder echoed around the hills above them The explorer made camp with confident plans for the investigations to be carried out in

the morning

But a cloud burst, hall, sleet and the termfied shouts of his Indians awoke him in the middle of the night. His camp, set up at dusk in a usually dry but natural guiter, was flooded, the rain ran heavily down the mountains. The lake in front of him appeared to be swelling. With his shivering party he sloshed through water to the doubtful protection of a half caverin in the rocks.

A few garments and sealed provisions were all that were salvaged next day The camp had been washed away Yet Brooks still thought of the Incan treasure He weighed the situation and realized that even when the waters of the lake had receded he would need a boat or else have a wait in front of him during which the few provisions would be exhausted

That night decided his immediate future. Most of his men vanished. They knew why he had climbed into the mountains. There are few Indians in Eduador who do not know the story of the gold. His peons had regarded the thunder and cloudburst as a warning from the spirits of the Incas who had buried it. And they decamped whilst the going was good.

Brooks, left alone with one Indian, decided on the same counter, arther than face starvation or an end from exposure But suffering in both ways they wandered about in the snow storms of the mountain ranges, with senses almost numbed to despair until found by a relief party previously arranged for by the Colonel.

Brooks died before he could try again, but he had proved that the treasure guide, as a guide, was no fake I tseems un likely that Valverde, who, having such an intimate knowledge of the tortuous, weather guarded trail as to be able to lay it down in detail on paper years after leaving the country, should ever have penetrated so far into these uncomfortable mountains without any remunerative purpose. We knew that his fortunes had changed overnight Somewhere behind the lake that flooded Brooks' camp was the key to his riches This was fairly tangible evidence of the existence of a hidden 'hoard' of the Incas

It was to this treasure that the New York Times referred

## CHAPTER XVI

S the Panama Star and Herald had quoted-the main purpose the Expedition was "to establish friendly relations with and udy the Ssabela Indians of whom practically nothing is nown---"

And ten days later in another article—"valuable ethnological formation about the obscure Indian tribe is the prize the expedition hopes will crown a year's journey and study "

"The present party," said the Literary Digest, "expects, if all oes well, to explore a legend as well as study the Ssabelas " It had disappointed me to learn, as Eric again reshuffled his quipment, that the idea of testing the story of the treasure was

o be a secondary consideration

His mind was absorbed with Ssabela Indians and the plan of stronomically plotting every river in their country ven Ecuadorians had complained that the markings on the Driente section of some of their maps had been drawn up by part guesswork Being ambitious exacting people they denanded accuracy

In 1932 on the Upper Amazon, not very far from the sug gested haunts of the Ssabelas, Eric had lived for several months with the Jibaro Indians, who make head shrinking

their speciality

Wandering, or-to describe it more accurately-'blasting' about the bactenda estate which nestled at ten thousand feet in an Andes hollow, he resembled an impatient bull anxious to investigate the outside of a stockade, or a hon keen to get ın

Now and again I would catch his X ray eyes burrowing through the mountains which held him from his Ssabelas

"What are you looking at Eric?"

"Wha---? Nothing, where's Hector? Where's that---? "Is he all those things?"

"I told the little So and so to bring my map and compass, he's been gone fifteen minutes"

Hector was a young semi-educated Panamanian who had followed Eric from Guayaquil to Riobamba where, for one reason or another, he had been added to the expedition in an uncertain capacity

At the karenda he was posted with George in our emergency expedition kitchen George, who had turned so green after introducing his French platte to rich South American cooking, had managed restaurants as well as aeroplanes So he assumed the role of meal taster in-chief when not arranging expedition supplies

Outside our back veranda kitchen which had been boarded to be windproof, I had set up a shooting range. It was a very simple affair and consisted, at its inauguration, of a bent tin placed on a tree stump. My revolver, a 13 Colt, had been sent across the hills from a neighbouring bannada for me to try "on approval".

"Okay George, put your thumb on Hector, I'm about to

hole that target"
"Hector—Hector—Hect tor—com'ere——" Then in

clipped French accents, "all right, blaze—I've got the——"
There followed a description of Hector and his forebears

I rattled at the target

"Haven't heard the tin"

Further shots and a momentary gap whilst I shpped the revolving chamber out sideways and knocked out the shall Meanwhile an unrestrained French sharity would fill the kirchen and echo around the garden, rising in volume to the chimax of a verse Then—

"Start digging that ditch, you sonuvabitch"

"You're in the Army na—Her, Wheren's Hector! Where is that black— Hect tor—Hec—ah, I told you to sit by those vegetables, they've bo iled dry! Come 'ere—"

Ye-ca-00-OW!

Sounds representative of heavy laying on of hands. If it was George separating Hector from his scalp, there had obviously been due cause. Despite the fact that George had more than his quota of "guts", he was by nature a mild person. Perhaps it was a case of the bad workman blaming his equipment but I was unsatisfied with the Colt and ultimately changed it for a Mauser automatic which was either true or else fitted the deflection of my eye

Peter and Mont had developed an Inca bug rather strongly at Riobamba whilst Sonny and I had been at the basenda. They had conducted treks from the Hotel Metropolitano to the site of an old Inca village and had successfully recovered pieces of pottery. So that encouraged by reports at the basenda, they concentrated on excavation in all parts of the estate where plough bullocks had sunk into loose ground

At the first digging they were successful in recovering a small clay basin of approximately seven inches in diameter. It was just bad luck that the point of one of the excavating picks had chipped a healthy piece from the rim.

During subsequent excursions around the furrowed hillsides, when I accompanied them, they had no luck at all, but the bug very soon bit me too. We were not just digging for the pottery of those lost people, but with every new size we expected to bring up an Inca. The lucky first time had pro-

duced—along with the softened bowl—pieces of bone.

It is a well known fact amongst the Indians, that Incas were

It is a well known fact amongst the Indians, that lines we buried in a sitting position, with a filled container—such as we found—of child or other native spirit placed on their heads. The idea of this was that they should have sustenance on their journey to the Gods. Our imagination roped in the possible discovery of ornaments in gold. But we found none

The peons who dug were too slow for me The idea of fishing up a whole kinsman of Atahualpa was too much of a stimulant Taking the shovel from these superstitious Indians who, preferred to have nothing to do with any part of the business, I would burrow intently downwards with a fervour which the peons failed to understand Their eyes widened considerably To them one always had the morrow

In Peter and Mont enthusiasms concerning such excavations had reached their climax, before they had left Riohamba, and they now adopted an attitude of studied calm. After the creation of a few more bear pits, I developed this demeanour my-





self and Sonny who, towards the end of these minor expeditions, had decided to come and find out what it was all about, was the one who dug like a manue, whilst we squatted above these mining operations and spoke of the Orients and Erics plans to divide the party

His ideas concerning the Oriente had reached such propor tions that this was the only way of covering the whole itinerary, part of which was to discover a new pass across the Andes

I don't mind admitting that the idea of the treasure lake had done more than just appeal to me. It seemed unnatural to be in a corner of the globe where one of the world's richest treasures was hidden and not look for it. And I had done what I could to arrange with Eric that I should be among those to make the mountain trip.

It was finally decided that Carl Mont and I should be the chosen few That is to say we were to find a new soute to the Oriente across the Andes 'But—

Carl, over six feet and genial, was an old hand at delving for treasure. As a young boy he had begun his exploring excert in Switzerland. He joined up with an archaological research group which had uncovered a Roman camp-site near Baden and amazed the older men by his personal discovery of ancient swiver table-ware

Then in 1932 he financed in part and organized a salvage expedition to the wreck of the SS Menda sunk forty five miles off Cape Henry, Virginia This expedition recovered the ships safe.

Whilst Eric was getting his Oriente expedition into shape in New York, Carl filled in time by attempting to trace a treasure on the coast of Costa Rue. There was not much time before he was to join the party in Ecuador, but certainly long enough to discover that the man accompanying him who was supposed to know its hiding place, did not. The latter had heard of Carl's affinity for treasure, and approached him for backing, suggesting a fifty fifty share-out.

Friend Carl was interested in the story. The fellow's father had shown him as a boy the storm-swept crag hiding this mysterious loot. For some reason unknown to me, the father

had not found an opportune moment during which to remove it Apparently it was a family hoard

After many years of planning to recover it the son finally chose Carl as a medium. When they arrived on the spot all crags looked alike. Finally Carl left for Guayaquil where he

toined Eric

Mont both a geologist and topographer had been manager of a Northern Canadian property upon which was found the

largest gold strike in the history of Canadian mining

It was unlikely that both these fellows would completely lack interest in the gold contents of the Andes Most unlikely, for as soon as the Llanganatis Mountains, which was the last range that could be seen to the east, from the battenda estate, were mentioned, the subject of the Valverde guide again came up, and it was debated, not very strongly against, as to whether the matter should be looked into

In view of the bad luck and weather which had haunted the footsteps of Spruce and Brooks we decided to proceed direct to the "three Cerros Llanganaus" which we considered to be the peaks of Cerro Hermoso in the Llanganaus Mountains

At the base of the three peaks referred to by Valverde there was said to be a lake into which the ancients threw gold. As far as we were concerned this would save the necessity for a longer circuitous trip from Pelileo. There was no need, we argued, to take the ungeometrical course drawn up by Valverde if we could already recognize a point at the end of the treasure trial.

I have said that we could see the Llanganatis Mountains from the estate We could, but the estate was a large one, and it took us half a day's ride to reach a point from which they were basely wisely.

barely visible.

It is incomplete to state that Mont was merely a geologist, topographer and mine manager. He had also studied medicine.

Having seen the way in which he straightened out the physical irregularities of bacienda life, I am inclined to murmur "And how!"

For instance a small Indian entering the world decided to do so in reverse, with resulting complications Mont rectified the catastrophe A pig had a cancerous growth Mont operated.

Parasitical life was affecting the intestines and health of one of the bannula Indians. Most went to work and had difficulty of restraining enthesistic assistance from Sonny. Thoms entered feet, fingers were cut "Where's the Dottor" as the peons began to call lum, became the continuous cry

As I took a lot of photographs, Mont frequently put his camera into my hands and posed with the latest "white bundle". It seemed that arrival dates had been speeded up Certanly our host need never seek common labour outside the estate

"How long will this go on? I hope we get away soon "

"Have you discovered what they do when there's no one like you around Mont?"

"Mm hm—they take one of those long knives and go down to the river It's ten to one you'll see them working in the fields the same afternoon"

At nights the transmitter was tested and tuned to deliver signals on the wavelength arranged with the high powered station at Riobamba. At the same time the petrol-driven dynamotor was ined out. It worked well but was noisy,

"Scare any Sabela we'll ever approach," remarked someone. By day, long harred Indian 'potters' arrived and took away on their backs loads weighing eighty to a hundred pounds, which were to be carried ahead, through the pass by Agoyan, to an Orenti village named Puyo.

After Puyo what Indians could be obtained were to carry smaller loads "on account" of the rungle heat.

And then the time came for Euc to take his Ornate section away. He was to go a day before we were, so we took part in the farewell staged. The party accompanying, managed to find space on the lorry, which was loaded with duffles and camp beds. Two over acquisitions were an interpreter who spoke some Oucheus, and a dog to whom George had turned after moments of despair with Hetocr. He called it Napo.

"Hector—has anybody seen Hector, is he aboard?"

"HECTOR—blast his black hide, where is he this time——"
A stentorian chorus of the same call.

"He-e-ecc-tor-rr-Hector, come on now, hurry up."

Hector climbed aboard. Poultry clucked its way from the slowly-moving wheels of the truck. The Oriente party were

away.

Our host of the *battenda* came with us for part of our trek into the mountains. He rode a mule whilst we were mounted on fairly able horses.

But the mule was the most capable. Where a horse would hesitate, stumble, jib or slide, the mule would plod successfully along. It seems ridiculous It appeared to be so at the time What has this mule that the horses haven't, I asked myself.

Certainly cunning It undoubtedly used its brain.

From the top of the first range of hills, we looked at the now very minute basenda nesting at their foot. To this point the road or path had been fairly solid. Afterwards it became middy and we left open country to pass through forests which, despite the altitude, were of tangled equatorial growths. I did not comment on this at the time but it seems strange to me now.

Emerging from the woods into an open clearing, we came upon peons grouped among oxen around a native hut.

Some of these mountain cholor fitted the "load-brackets" which we had brought from New York, to each other's backs I stood watching them as, having strapped on the brackets, they slung on the cases of supplies and rolled tents.

It was hard to find any definite expression in their faces although I could catch a grunt as they momentarily wriggled

themselves like horses adjusting a saddle.

The brackets may have made things better for them or they may not. We saw to it that no peon carried more than he could comfortably manage, but these men were ultimately to amaze me. How would you care to jog up hills with a hundred pound weight on your back all day? That is what these fellows did and they outpaced the oxen and frequently the horses and outselves. Yes, the oxen were loaded and carried the heavier things like the cases of kerosene. Yet something in the constant swaying and sloping of the trail affected this cargo for the time leaked fater a few miles.

It had been my idea that I had learnt something of mountain

riding in Australia but, of course, that was just my idea. I have spoken of the Ecuadorian Andes as representing, in parts, geological chaos and this, perhaps, was the cause of the irregular passage. It was not an uncomfortable first day's ride Nobody could be uncomfortable in armichair saddles such as those, but the horses must have felt the journey.

Midday came and we were riding and sliding down the face of large boulders. But it was a new experience finding myself at angles that I had thought only possible in "tilted-camera"

Western movies But it was not unpleasant

Around one o'clock we dealt successfully with raspadura sugar—which is like a brown candy toffee—between slabs of tasteless stees I will not call it cheese, merely a distant relative of that toothsome food product It looked as if it had been made of milk senarated from the cream

However, with raspadura it tasted well, but I think that in rarefied mountain air, for we had been climbing most of the time, a few good husky pieces of bere between thick rounds of bread would have put a different complexion on things. Our ideas had dwell too much on concentrated fined

We ate in a mist which had been there all the time. It was damp and when we resumed the journey it wasn't possible to see more than three or four peons ahead

Compasses hung from our belts but they were of little use because the trail snaked in tight turns and alternatively wide ones. Then it rained really hard for two hours

In the afternoon it cleared a little of fog and we began to tire of all this sliding about, yet I repeat, it was not uncomfortable,

and the horses hides steamed and kept us warm.

Again it rained and hailed quite severely. This time there was not even a doubtful shelter as there had been before and we were compelled to ride through

Our host changed horses with Mont, that is to say Mont took the mule and shortly afterwards the horse that El Señor had taken over, slipped into a bog and lay there Finally it struggled out, having lain long enough to recover strength

We rode along the tops of a very narrow range, along mountain lion and deer trails. When the light began to fail the rain conveniently ceased and we looked for a camp-site.

It took us an hour to find one.

We pitched camp not very successfully, having chosen what subsequently turned out to be the damp bed of a valley and to reach it we zig-zagged down a pathless eighty degree face. Deals ask may have be the sure I still don't know.

Don't ask me how, because I still don't know.

There were no branches for tent poles, yet somehow we strung up the tent. There was no wood for the fire. Yet some-

how we lit it.

One of the bullocks got away. We caught it, Somehow we cooked a meal. We saw that the peons cooked one also.

We slept.

## CHAPTER YVII

ON the second marning we encountered snow. Large patches spread over the trail. This turned sliding into slipping and skidding into sprawling. It was a new experience to ride down frazen tock

Then towards the afternoon we dipped into a long valley, and about three o'clock could see the Linganatis Mountains in the distance. The valley conveniently ran in their direction. So we rode along the hillsides to keep away from the watery thoor which gradually turned into a river, until it was evident that we should have to descend and cross it. To which Mont commented: "More darned fun".

The healthy torrent had reached a momentum of no less than fifteen miles per hour down this wide sorey valley. Somehow we had to "make" the other side----

It is a "conscience-striking" business to plump twelve odd stone into the heavy Mexican saddle and sit tight whilst your pony grovels on its chest and tries to get somewhere. With pitcous heaves mine would squat in the receptive mud to tecover energy and then plunge again.

You could do nothing Dismounting, your high boots filled with ooze and you were liable to part permanently both yourself and the horse.

The thoughts of these animals must have been bitter ones and by the look in the eye of my living raft, he needed only half a chance, to have truculently plunged riderless towards home.

My despairing four-legged friend was caked so thickly with the mud, as was the saddle, that I decided to take him through a deeper, though rock-bottomed, part of the river. He successfully stood up to the force of the water, but was not at all anxious to co-operate with any cleansing stunt. Furthermore the rain had begun again. 161

On the other side the going was even messier, for the bullocks had found their way ahead of us and had churned up the steep bank of soft soil. The ridiculous part about it was that, because of a twist in the volume of water which we had successfully passed once, a second crossing had to be negotiated. This section was not wide, but the banks were sheer, and the only way was to jump it. But the horses must have felt that they had been shod with the anvil.

The country now appeared to consist of small hills with furrows, which we rode along It was no good trying to move at any angle to them so we let them mark our route and philosophically curved downwards and round the slopes

This lengthened our journey

Then the clouds showed their silver lining They ceased to hesitatingly spit at us, which had been their occupation for most of the afternoon. Even the wind died to nothing and to crown all this good fortune the sun came out. If you have ever begun an exposed all-day ride through had weather with occasional half for several hours, you might find it an effort to ward off the discouraging realization that probably in another four or five hours you will still be cold and wet. It's a disconcerting premonition.

So that when suddenly the bare plains warmed under the blue gap in the sky above, and the mist disappeared leaving the horse's coats again steaming their welcome warmth, it was not only cheering, it gave us a new perspective of the country over which we had traversed And now that sunlight suddenly unmasked a snow-capped peak of Cerro Hermoso, treasure hunt enthusiasm gripped us all over again Sometimes it's had to remember that the bad thunes also have an end

It soon became so hot that coats were discarded although the afternoon was slowly being curtained off

Then as we drew towards the top of the range which looked across a two thousand feet depth of valley, to the Langanaus towening above our own altitude, we began to realize that this was to be as far as we could take the oxen and horses That, somewhere about this point, we should have to form a base camp

We decided on this with great reluctance Having performed

such equestran acrobatics along the trail, it was difficult to convince ourselves that there was a limit to hazardous riding It was so hard to believe in fact that, for an hour or so, we rode from one high ndge to another hoping, almost knowing, that we must find a way through for the animals

Yet every sweep of the binoculars failed to suggest a solution. How we should get ourselves across was to occupy no

small part of our time

But, while sun still flickered on a white tip of Cerro Hermoso, from somewhere above the range behind us, a shadow had settled over the rest of our world and again it was time to find a camp-site, somewhere less open than this high ridge which we had reached.

And so we turned back towards the valley, across which we had sloshed, and descended half way down the mountain side towards it.

Then suddenly below us was another of those occasional masses of jungle and we moved in its direction, thinking of tent poles, wind protection and firewood.

Yes, we found all those things and a sufficiently wide "shelf" on which to pitch a camp and loose the animals. Although our host preferred to anchor one or two of them to ropes

It was odd that the last two hundred yards of our day's journey was perhaps the most difficult. The matted, tunsted tangle, through which we drove the horses—we couldn't ride them—grew from one of the steeper slopes. It meant that the animals lad to find their way and naturally they took the path of least resistance, which was not entirely a straight one. In fact it twisted both up and down the hillside

Not infrequently these puzzled creatures found themselves surrounded by a thick net of green Wearily they would stand with a difficult foothold, whilst a peon behind us, dropping his load, would draw a machete, and hack at the immediate barrier. The second camp we called Bella Vista We liked to think

that the occasional view of Cerro Hermoso's highest white peak qualified the name.

Water was located nearby, but we could never find it in the form of a spring. So the Indians digging into the morass, constructed a muddy wallow, from which it was possible to

scoop a brown solution. This was successfully 'boiled' into water.

And with a base for at least a couple of days, here was an opportunity for experience with the packed 'larder'. An investigation reminded us that we should have to like Grapenuts "or else"-

The alternative was more concentrated food, vegetables chiefly, looking like flakes of coloured oatmeal in this form There were one or two tins of "potted dog" but these were "emergency" rations

With the food, there was a considerable amount of ammuni-

tion, and we had, as well as the revolvers, a rifle.

Two deer had appeared on the trail during the day's trek The thought of venison cooked over an open fire already brought the atoma tingling across the palate. But we retired on stomachs packed with Grapenuts and felt well enough for it

The first night's sleep at Camp No 1 had resembled a collapsed sack race after our struggle with sleeping bags. At Bella Vista we slumped parallel to the canvas door and I paid for my position farthest away from it, and consequently any possible rain or snow, by having to manipulate all those etceteras which constituted my bed, before the others turned in

My coat and trousers formed a pillow and my shirt and socks rolled inside softened it But if either the trouser legs or socks were wet, as on most occasions. I heaved the bulky

duffle from my feet and leant on that.

The tent was a medium sized one, but it had a canvas "floor", eliminating the necessity for a ground sheet, so that if anything was lost amidst the collection of wet boots, discarded clothes and oddities to which we all contributed, then it was found again next day

Mont was always second to retire and was not averse to annexing most of the communal blanket stretching over the

three "sleeping bags", during the night

Next morning our host turned back but not before he had accompanied us to the highest peak. We had risen to find a snow blanket covering the camp and an early survey showed us definitely that, far from the idea of getting the animals over the valley, we should have to temporarily mark time ourselves

From the frozen ridge we debated as to whether the valley floor was the morass that the other had been But it was too far below us to determine accurately anything about it.

Through the binoculars we looked east over the valley for life on the Llanganatis. There was none visible. Only thick. snow-weighted jungle scrub The logical way to the valley bottom seemed to be straight down the steep sides of the ravine since one part threatened much the same as another. For about five hundred feet it was sheer with grass and small shrubs. These would certainly give us foothold Then forest trees grew one below the other and finally developed into plain undiluted jungle which appeared to stretch well over a thousand feet to the valley floor. What would the going be like through that mass of foliage? Could it be much worse than the little wood which guarded our present camp site Bella Vista?

It was not much good ruminating. We should have to cross in time and something would work itself out Having decided on a point from which to start when the snow had cleared from the slippery slopes, our attention turned to revolver practise

with snowmen as targets

This afforded our host more amusement than I expect he had enjoyed for a long time. Another quick nip in defiance of the sprinkling snow flakes, another bite of raspadura, and he would blaze again from the hip, accompanying the shot with one or two doubtful English words, which I hope were not a legacy of the expedition.

"But you can't call a snow man that."

"Paraue no?"

"Well, I-shoot again--"

A blaze of shots.

"I shoot the little --- head, no?"

"No, at least yes, that is to say, give him a better name-"Caramba, porqu-ah-hl"

And El Señor would pepper away at the diminishing figure, just as a peon, ordered to build it up again, had managed to skip out of range

We were sorry when he rode back along the trail. He was good company and had given us an amusing time at the

hactenda.

Several days passed by before we were able to attempt the descent. The snow had cleared just as quickly as it had appeared although there were still traces on the ground

As we 'packed up' every evening at dusk in order to save lamp-fuel, we were always up early and when the ravine appeared as it had been when we had first seen it, the peons

were encouraged to pack quickly

To give them their due, they did This was most unusual and certainly strange when one considers that they held the Llanganatis in superstitious dread Unusual, because South American Indians enjoy postponing anything that they have been encouraged to do But I don't expect they had enjoyed camping in the snow, although we hadn't done so badly with the canvas floored text.

Still, if the cold was their worry, they did not make a very profitable move. Nevertheless, they did move and we were

lucky to get away by seven thirty in the morning

It requires no effort to slither, if the angle is steep enough, and in this way we reached the jungle-patch 'Jungle-patch', 'wooded scrub' or 'tangled undergrowth' does not entirely describe the obstacles which kept us from hurrying to the bottom of that steeply walled valley

It is always easy to imagine oneself going down somewhere.

Down a cliff, a man hole, a rope ladder, a greasy pole, but
somehow our descent didn't work according to plan We
would hurl ourselves at the mat of foliage, liana and femery,
which ran twenty feet or so before finding root, and were
bounced back.

Again the marbete would be brought into use Two peons hacked abreast and wriggled head downwards through the hole that they had made Since our feet couldn't think and one would have lost sight of them anyway, we dived through the hole shoulders first. It is easy to say "dive". It wasn't easy to complete this motion. One was hable to be staked You just wriggled hand over hand hauling yourself down, always down wards, towards the base of whatever you grasped, like a boa constrictor heading for its prey

Then suddenly we were lucky enough to strike tapir trails They honeycombed this wilderness, gave us groping space and led us into a darkness where we hullo'd each other now and again in order to keep together. I thought of a one-time lecturer who had done his best to guide my learning to a reasonable standard "Man," I had heard him once remark, "last swung from branch to branch in the fastnesses of Thibet."
Whether his teaching bore any relation to fact is for the moment beside the point. But I was hard put to it to prevent myself thinking. "Wog, if, you could only see me now."

The peaceful music of a trickling stream indicated that we were approaching the floor of the valley. The going had become easier and shafts of light appeared above us. Very soon we found the stream that we had heard and almost immediately looked across the bed of the valley which was hidden under

long, waving grass

The gently falling water was crystal clear and a great deal of quartz was scattered about. But there was no gold in evidence We wasted very little time, though a spike in the foot of a peon gave us an enforced break. Mont of course went to work with his instruments.

If the fatigue of the descent was merely mental, the climb up the other side certainly evened things up It was not as sheer, and not as thickly-covered with jungle, but whereas we had swung hand-over hand down into the ravine, similar trapeze

acts constituted part of our journey away from it.

Despite the frequent necessity of "self haulage" up through trees in order to "gain ground', my severest obstacle to apprecation of the climb that aftermoon, appeared in the form of a ravenous hunger. I have never known anything like it. Usually if I am doing anything which has the slightest suspicion of interest about it and a meal comes along and looks at me, I have only to tell myself that I have had it, and that is that

But not in this valley It had become an obsession

"Let's stop and eat"

"Eat? Now? Why?"

"You don't want to eat row, Al, wait until we get to the top"

'Mont, I'm ready to eat right here and now"

Yet I postponed doing so, though I began the same wall
after another hundred yards

However, there was a silver lining to the cloud that hung above my stomach We reached a clearing, which moved away from the near vertical to a gentle slope To satisfy our selves we called it the top, and broke bread or Grapeouts

It made little difference to my mania which was changing to self pity. My goodwill towards the world lessened minute by minute. I have never satisfactorily explained it to myself, except that the ratefied air must have a lot to do with it. Bleak thoughts floated one by one across my mind and weak points in Carl and Mont stared me in the face. My appetite increased My mind certainly wasn't well. I was becoming airy in the head, when we heard a shout—

"Dantes, that means tapir," said Carl rising and loading the

Yes, "dantes", there was that shout again

The peons were jumping up from where they had squatted beside their loads. For the first time expression swept across their usually immobile features. They seized machetes which had been sheathed in their packs and brandished them in the air.

Carl shot ahead with his rifle at the ready There was a lot of chatter behind a clump of trees Cries that something was coming, no going, no coming, no—it had got away And then there were shots from the Winchester carried by Carl

When Mont and I rounded the corner, we saw nothing but a lot of disgruntled faces

"Hairy tapir," breathed Carl, "big one ran up the hill

looked at me missed it "

The peons returned slowly towards the packs Carl with studied indifference, but obviously very disappointed, alter nately "sighted", and blew down the barte! Then there was another shout 'A danter was behind a mound further up the solid the state of the peons charged up the hill waving their cutlasses. We restrained them without too much uproar and Carl, beside himself with delight, sped like Mercury to surprise the tapit. He disappeared behind the knoll which hid the animal, and we heard a shot

What luck? What had happ—why here was something bouncing down the hill We spread out and the peons formed

a half-circle with raised machetes Near them was Mont, fifty yards to my right

The creature, giving an impression of a "black bear-cum rhinoceros" galloped in our direction, with its head down I tried to think of all that I had read about tapits. Were they carnivorous? Did they tear out one's entrails and pounce upon them? I remembered that this type had three sharp claws—

Why it headed for me I don't know Probably, with its head down, it couldn't see well enough to make a proper choice I fingered my vest pocket 'putt putt' and wondered whether it could still spit metal—

It at least diverted the animal which, when only fifteen feet away veered, and headed for Mont and his disciples

Blood-curdling whoops, which might have chilled the Con quistadores, greeted the tapir, beneath waving cutlasses It turned and plunged up the hill

The peons scampered amidst the halo of shots Not giving Carl his due, I waited for Indians to bite the dust But the tapit finally fell and the peons stood unscathed

The calibre of the Winchester rifle coincided with that of my insect frightening Mauser and with the uncertain claim that at fifteen feet I "couldn't have missed', I disputed the suggestion that it was Carl's "bag"

All the peons and ourselves were in very good spirits but my 'hungerphobia' had not diminished But now it had an outlet-

Different visions floated across my mind Juicily tender mental fillets of tapir sizzled and spat from a stake over an imaginary open fire.

I don't like watching people treading on rats. It distresses me to see that 'promising life-inpped in the bud' look on porkers' faces in provision shops. Furthermore, after a few chapters of The Jungle, I went vegetarian for a month——

But here, standing before this nine hundred pounds of carcase, a mild man suddenly turned savage. Grasping my sheath haife with hunger-driven determination, I carved up that tapir in the manner of a demon Druid——

When I appeared with several "fillets' and my hair gorily

matted, Mont and Carl had already pitched camp and it was six p.m.

Yet something had gone wrong. That juicy tapir steak tasted like old shoes dipped in the wrong sauce. And that sauce left its aroma on everything for weeks. Even the cocoa mugs had it—

The chunks of tapir meat, which were not given to the peons, were strung up on tent poles. Did the fact that this danter flesh dimnnished nightly bear any relationship to the pussy-cat tracks around the camp.

Since the tent we slept in resembled a large canvas bag, we might have expected any night to be hauled off down the valley.

After the first fillet, we returned to Grapenuts-

## CHAPTER XVIII

UNTIL I had begun to think about it, I hadn't really appreciated the extent of the surly reception from the Lingmants range. It resented being kicked out of its old gardening togs into a clean collar to receive visitors seeking shelter, who never should have been so far from home anyays.

"Ant you sure that it is to be only for a night?" it had morosely inquired of the strangers. And now in the optimistic freshness of the morning it wore a resigned expression of in justice as would a buil elephant that had been pinioned in its sleep.

Its backbone curved away from us to the south like that of a museum brontusaurus, with ourselves somewhere near the fuil. And it was about as alive, though the clamour of the Christian Brothers General Interest party (or could it have been falling water and earlow minds?) should have discouraged any dead thing from offering the semblance of its sole occupation

But the attitude of this infrequently interviewed range was explained in the fact that it is only one of a large pre war—

possibly pre-every war-family

Whilst its many brothers and sisters have been acclaimed by such "acclaimants" as ribbon-developers, air transport and mass-mining companies, the Llanganatis has had to continue living its day to-day existence in the closed wing. In this hermit like wilderness its nightmare has probably been a dread that somebody like ourselves would appear at the side with an agent's Order to View and eatch it off-guard at the top of the stars.

Yet the Llanganatus range should possess no unhappy complex from the fact that its physical attributes do not correspond entirely with those of the other members of Ande Ecuadors family, such as Chimboraro, Alare (which blew its twentyseven thousand feet head off to leave standing two spikes of nuncteen thousand five hundred each) Sangai, Cotapaxi, Tunguragua and others It has a grandeur and fineness of its own Its party hat 'Hermoso' means 'handsome', even 'beauti ful', and it is, even without its complete snow mantle, which was the way that we were first able to enjoy it

To the east of the camp a valley evolved itself from nothing and a mountain spring appeared to proportionately grow with it, as it sped to a canon which crossed at right angles

a couple of miles away

The camp clung at an angle to the eastern slope of a Llanganatis vertebre. Here and there around the valley cascades could be seen contributing to an out-of sight torrent which we presumed echoed that roar from the cañon

Ah. ves. Valverde had mentioned a cascade

From the tent and practically as far as the eye could see, ussue like bamboo grass suggested never-ending fuel for the fire. Or so we thought It was certainly a welcome sight up here where there were so few trees

To the north of us along the ridge at a lower level were strange mounds, small hillocks which, on the previous after noon, had represented our tapir shoot. They dotted a comparatively flat shoulder peculiarly. At the most some were twenty feet high. I wondered about them but that was all

With a Grapenut breakfast under the belt, Mont and I ex humed a couple of haversacks, a pick and shovel, two 'goldpans', and the will to discover whether Valverde's quaking bog ('where there is much gold ") lay in wait beneath any of those rip snorting cascades which poured down cliffs to the east Yet we were a little premark.

Although a short climb of half a mile or so above the camp showed us a very splendid Cerro Hermoso, with three peaks towering above the rest of the Llanganatis, it was still some distance away I cannot accurately say how many miles, but perhaps ten or fifteen

Looking at it was not very difficult, but the problem of how o get there was indeterminable. The section in between was composed of high indiges, which suggested that any latent steeple pack ability should be brought out and dusted. Furthermore, the supposition that saliva was dipping from the mouth of not one but a hundred quaking bogs capable of gulping poor explorers proved to be "not without justification".

Yet despite these facts, this "pinning down" of the treasure lake all seemed too easy. Spruce had apparently failed to even approach the three peaks mentioned in the guide. Brooks had reached them, but not without undue failgue—the legacy of severe snow storms.

We smugly considered that his journey must have taken a very circuitous route, and that a little tingonometry such as our own would have dispensed with the necessity for worry over a Margaintat mountain which, in any case, we couldn't see Our eyes coasted around the cañons and mountain tops and we topographically recorded impressions in field books

Preferring not to risk the chance of bullocks being staked on tree tops or disappearing into the carlon "bowels of the carth", our patience, enshrouding the transport of equipment from Bella Vista to "Camp Three", had to be extended until the neons had made several wearsome journeys.

As for ourselves, strangled 'seal-cum locomotive in-St Pancras' pulling and blowing heralded our return from any reconnotive of more than a mile. The elevation of the camp was only about 15,000 odd feet, but energy was rarer than harry tains:

Incidentally the tapir skin would have made a very usable rug if it had been treated the correct way. The hair was a rich black colour, about two inches in length, and was soft Alihough we pounded at the hide with salt and soap and sent it back to the hannala per home-loving peon, the project went wrong somewhere and I only heard it again referred to—in good natured disparagement by our host—once

After the 'excitement' of having shot it died down, our enthusiasm lessened considerably. The New York Zoo had com missioned Eiric to produce in that city its first harry rapir to be held in captivity and we had allowed the opportunity to slip through our fingers. Consciences were frequently 'deblemished' by the fact that we were not in a position to have comered it. Yet, armed with lassos, I think that we might have compiled with the Zoo is requirements at this gathy stage. However, it was too late and to be hypothetical was of no advantage The fact that we could not, in this case, eat the meat was hardly balm to the point in question

It took little more than a day to become used to the new

atmosphere, after which voyages of discovery became more and more adventurous. With expeditionist number three 'hawk-eyeing' all annexable objects in the camp, two of us

would sally forth to scale peaks and chip rocks

Although only the unwise allows temptation into the path of a native, I doubt whether the Indians would have indiaged any piltering. They had every opportunity, when carrying the packs, of "encouraging" the straying unco-operative bullocks. On those earlier occasions the majority of the peons had been out of our sight from the time they had jogged off until we had made camp. Later, in the Orients jungles, I encountered almost unbelievable honesty. Here, of course, we were dealing with a different brand of Indian.

After two days at Camp Three, Mont and I picked up the pans, picks and waders and decided to descend into the valley which ran due east to ultimately join the cañon. Because it ran apparently north and south, we considered the cañon was an extension of the ravine holding us from Certo Hermost.

Finding our way to the bottom of this valley was no less complicated than in dealing with its cousin between Bella

Vista and our present camp

The "easy way" appeared to be that of squatting on one's haunches and allowing the precipitous slopes to do the rest Whilst the mobile quality of the local mud rivalled that of the Cresta Run for patches of twenty yards at a time, the conclusion to one of these lighting rushes through space invariably occurred on the end of a stick, underneath a log, or in some thorny growth, the natural offensive of which impressed me more than on any previous inspection

Once more we heard and sought the Alogonquin gurgle obviously nearby, and, having found it, had to climb slightly up the slope again in order to traverse less receptive though firmer ground Yet the gain was dubious, for we had brought no peons to hack a path The jungle was practically as thick as it had hear below Bella Vista

Then the waders came into play With these we could walk the bed of the creek "splosting" in unsuccessful leaps from one submanne rook to another. Of course one could hardly have called those wave-making heaves 'leaps' Most of the time we were lucky enough to keep the water level below the thightops of the waders. Sometimes at the conclusion of an ambitious plunge I had the feeling that a refrigerated frog had been stowed away between my instep and the gum boot. It was actually a litre or two of ice-cold creek which had found its way "over the top"

Waterfalls appeared at our feet and suddenly the Culebra Cut walls bordering the rushing water rose sheer to a foliage sky This, of course, meant a circuitous retreat and lost time

Despite occasional deep gutters such as these and the grow ing volume of the stream, the passageway refused to widen for a considerable distance

The 'mud bow's end' found us "putting in" our hands to a quaking bog. But apart from the resulting manicurists nightmare, we "gathered up at the bottom" nothing more than "grains' of coze

Not that our expectations had extended further, for as I have previously intimated, there was evidence that quaking bogs populated each valley

And so, apparently, did cascades They hutled their way downwards in a manner which would have impressed habitules of Niagara.

Grapenut time found us panning the river. There was nothing haphazard about it, for Mont was an old hand at the game, and I liked to consider that I could wield a pretty pan

But no "grains of gold" appeared

How far were we from Valverde's beaten or unbeaten track? After a lengthy séance of panning everything behind and below the water-covered rock ridges, we trekked further "down" the valley trying not to lose height.

Alrady we were two thousand feet below the camp As we approach the callon, hamboo-grass again appeared and there was evidence that many upus had slept in it. They had a habe of breaking down these tissue sticks into a rough square with one side of it bounded by a regular tappir trail.

This was a good sign. It suggested the possibility of a bloodless round up in the near future. Meanwhile the tapits of the district sat glied to their observation posts and refused to show themselves.

The roar of the valley swelled below us with high powered rushing noises similar to the sound effects of a fire swallowing a heath a minute.

Then Mont pointed ahead---

East by north-east a husky black mountain towered over flat land and lesser hills with valleys. It was a considerable distance away, but in an instant had suggested the same thing to both of us. Friend Mont spoke the equivalent to the words already in my mind.

"Pyrites"

"Yes, old Margantas himself"

Now Montfort is by nature, and has been by profession, a geologist Practically any old rock to him is a thing of beauty—almost a poem——

I should never lay myself open to a snort from the (to me) British master of all rocks—one affectionately known in geo logical circles as "Briny"—by suggesting that my attention to his geognostic thunderbolts was ever as tenacious as the next man's But it is always pleasant to believe that pyrites cannot fool one even if it is merely a constituent of a dark blur on the horizon

Well then, if the Margaistas mountain was over there, how was it that the three peaks, alleged by Brooks to have "appeared in the distance" when he had rounded this 'pyrites' elephant, were narre to us

Whilst Cerro Hermoso with its humps (and we concluded that being the Cerro of the Llanganatis—Hermoso was the Cerro Llanganatis) lay off at an angle to our right, the Marpanias was further away and slightly to the left

Would the Incas, Valverde, Spruce or Brooks ever have travelled in two thirds of a circle? Could the original Inca who led Valverde to the treasure have travelled first towards the Inca Way, along which the "ancients" were conveying the gold south to Cajamarca, when the order came to bury it?

If so, then the hiding place could not have been far from this

great road Whoever led Valverde to it did not start from Quito as did the Inca Way, but from Pelileo which is, perhaps, a hundred miles further south

It is possible that Valverde and his Indian had first to locate landmarks at the point near the linea Way where the "hoarders" had turned into the mountains. The Incis may have turned off east or west. Who is to say? Certainly no one living to-day, although there are many who consider themselves to be in formed upon the subject.

Some suggest that the Inca Way took a course from the north along the Andes to the east of Cerro Hermoso If this was so, or if this road travelled null it approached the Llanganaus at an angle which, if it had continued, would have run east of them, then one can imagine the Incas turning in south west or west towards the three Hermoso peaks which rose to a height of well over sixteen hundred feet. And consequently the path taken by the person leading Valverde to the spot, (and therefore the only trail know a and recorded by the latter), probably did traverse two thirds of a circle if started from Pelaleo.

It was an interesting supposition with many pros and cons. However, I had always concluded that Brooks, on rounding the mountain of pyrites, had looked testis-ard to the distant 'three pinnacles', but this could not have been so if it had been Cerro Hermoso that he had seen. But the path to be taken around the Alarganian has been debated many times in the past. The written guide, with its conflicting hieroglyphic, had proved the uncertainty.

And yet had st?

With each copy taken of other transcripts of the guide, few words of the story could have been lost. But the symbol drawn by Valverde representing the circumbulatory route could have been badly reproduced, twisted altered. There was only one time way of being sure of the context version and that was to inspect the original document. Unfortunately this is—for the moment—impossible for most people. For although the guide in the Spaniard's own hand, lay until recently in the archives of Latacinga, a town south of Quito, it was eventually stolen and has not been recovered.

Mont and I now felt that the mountain of pyrites was a better day's earth than any handful of gold from a bog. With much theorizing and dramatic talk, we took another mouthful of Grapenuts and proceeded back the way we had come

This, however, was not quite the easy business expected, for we had carefully made an effort not to lose height, and had succeeded in this respect fairly well. But the conversational analysis of Incan life pleasantly dulled the effects of fatigue, and it was not until our muscles baulked even on low gear, they effet the need for special fuel. The rarefied height demanded it A "cut off joint", with its couple of companions, would have done the trick, but for the time being this was "out", since the tapit had not been a gastronomic success. Yet the Grapenuts and concentrated foods were surprisingly nutritive and filled a past more usefully than I would have considered possible than I would have considered possible.

We dealt with those steep slopes by crawling on our hands and knees The knapsacks and their contents, of course, made the difference, and I evolved a mental note to exclude etecteras next time

There usually is a top to anything alpine and we reached it, though some distance from the starting point of our descent. We could practically see the camp. That is to say it was hidden by a few minor hills. But "practically seeing" is certainly not "reaching." Progress dragged on in its tortoise-like fashion. And we eventually confronted natches of marshland.

Mont kangaroo'd his way to a solid hunk of Cerro Llanganatis, but the jump was not a success as the apparently permanent green patch disappeared beneath his feet and he slushed about in a dark slime and had difficulty in getting out again

This "sime" was a mixture of mud and oil and on several parts of the range we subsequently found other evidence of petroleum Perhaps the hidden wealth of the Llanganaus will ulumately be found in different form to the one that is quoted so frequently

Slowly we found a sogsy path around the morass For some reason or another the waders had gone back noto the knapsacks some hours beforehand. Anyhow, it was a little late now, for the knee boots which we wore had already been sopped into discusse by the weighty blue-brown mess.

Then being clever, I walked into the sort of sticky bog that one keeps in mind for relations, and began to sink. This was my first experience of anything resembling a "quicksand", but Mont held out a paw and heaved And that, subsequently, was that

Once clear of these bath tub pufalls we veeted hard aport and set a course for the mounds which had marked the tapir speedway

Everything went according to plan and we approached them without further incident or mushy bathing, passing alongside a volume of crystal clear water slipping quietly down the hill

The muddy episodes had left Mont and myself like something that the dog had brought in, and had constituted a wet and measy business. But the irony of it was, that after that exhausting and gimmy 'fectural-timb' through forest obstacles we were bursing for a throatful of something long and cool. The chart in my brain throbbed with the familiar phrases of "Beer is Beet?". and again, Miss?, "Gunnaess is good for you," whilst my mind tormented me with a vision of a long, frosted Worthington.

Mont was probably holding a post mortem on the expeditions canned "Schiltz" which had never passed beyond the Barclay Hotel So that, as far as we were concerned, nectar from heaven and this fresh running steam had a great deal in common

I took the weight off my stomach and slid back from where I had gulped mouthfuls of it, head downwards. The water clung in small bubbles to my week's layer of whiskers and I wiped at these with my unlaundered bandanna. The reflection of the handkerchet's colour in the pool held my eye. I gazed at it vacantly and for a second or two at another less inspiring image. Then my attention was niveted to something on the bottom. It resembled the stem of a cabinet minister's pipe

I reached for it

But the channel being clear was deceptive and I had to bathe in order to make my catch

Yes, it was a stem, and of clay Obviously it had broken from some carefully modelled pottery. And what was that,



more? There was another piece and yet another I wallowed again whilst Mont handled exhibit A in silence. The chips retrieved looked as if they might not be from the same utensil

What party could have camped in this desolate region before us? Was it that of the Friar, Spruce, a trier named Gutz-

Mont looked through his glasses with that expression which preceded his profundaties

"It's Incan," he murmured slowly And as he made the remark, the piece which I was lightly holding swished into a mass between my fingers

We looked further up this channel and regarded it with an apprehensive stare that might have been fixed upon an octopus. There were quite a number of smaller pieces of the same baked clay.

As we tracked the flow, it grew narrower Would it issue from the ground in little fissures like a spring, or——?

No, it certainly didn't A powerful body of water about eighteen inches wide, bounded outwards from what appeared to be a manually-constructed piping system existing beneath the surface of the ground And a hundred yards or so above where it plunged regulated into the open, stood the mounds that were like little hills

Was there any relationship between them? If these mounds covered any traces of lines habitation in the Llanganais, what were they? We could only wonder and debate, for the energy which had lent itself to our day's work was expended, and shadows were again creeping over the hills

My head had turned slightly east of northwards, and my eye was taking in a section of the range Mont looked that way, too Then he planted his tense gaze on me as if waiting for comment.

"Isn't that the outline of a very wide road-"

Mont s spectacles glinted

'The Inca Way?'

His voice held no note of sarcasm We turned, and with new energy, plodded towards the camp

## CHAPTER XIX

OVERCOME by trigger itch Carl shot a mountain deer The shock was too sudden and any minute I expected my stomach to give a Yippee and dance around all that good meat clapping hands

Anothow it gave the Grapenuts a day or two off and brought that "cut off joint" several steps nearer Fillet of venison beside red embers certainly became a fact that evening and, douched with a mystery pot of French mustard from the provision box, the tasty finale to the day's trek focussed our vision to an apparent Russian orgy

Poor animal ocasse, I have, as far as I know, a pretty stomach, which gets pretty hungry And, in the words of Pearl Buck, "meat is meat".

It was a pleasant termination to the long day and the peons, who had shared too, sang songs about the Llangants, not songs that had been made up on the spot but regular established songs, songs that had been sung for probably many generations harmonously echoing legends of the treasure, wind and thunder

In a few melodious lyttes, they had all our future headaches taped But steeped in well being and firelight it was easy to be indulgently adventurious and in this manner we retired and dirtled off into a colourful Midas world. Of course I am speaking for myself but the original reason for our presence in this region—ie, to locate another pass to the Oriente—had long been obscured under a welter of Incan anecdotes.

The things that we would do in the morning Up early, that was the idea The peons had been advised about a day-break getaway All day we would travel and by evening should be camped under the three shadows of Cerro Hermoso After

that it shouldn't be more than a day's trek to the lake And then----

My infallible mental alarum clanged 3 30 a m. I squirmed in the sleeping bag and tubbed my eyes at the sight of canvas six inches from my nose. The tent had practically caved in Its area had lessened considerably during the night and, when I sat up, one side of it seemed to rest on the heads of Mont and Carl.

I gave the canvas a smack and the result coincided with my supposition

Snow

I stepped over the others, untied the flap, and looked out It was inches deep and flakes were still falling

Carl, whose kidneys made a useful 'foothold', subconsciously objected, and came out of his somnolent state

Usually intent on preserving a calm demeanour which may or may not have been foreign to his temperament, he do nounced the snow in terms which might have made a truck-driver wince He saw at once what it meant A curtailment of all movement, the postponement of all discovery And no fires

We had expected this last disjunction from hot meals, but it struck is more forcibly now that we actually had something to cook. And this seemed the wrong atmosphere in which to lap up need water

Bamboo grass was cut and rubbed free of snow under canvas by the peons, in an attempt to dry it (sufficiently) for a fire But it was many days before success was achieved in this direction, and a long time before we had regular cooking

Every day we seized what opportunity there was for a little exercise but, without a chance of drying, the 'habit' became less and less attractive

Sounds that we heard at night, whilst the snow was there, were curious Staccato' bursts' like a thin whistle, resembling the repeated transmission of a series of radio dots, produced a strange resonance which blended frequently with the nocturnal jargon Altogether it was as if a number of hounds over the crest of the hill were whining and snorting in their sleep

In the mornings animal footmarks were to be seen in the snow around or near the camp and amongst them were those of deer, mountain lion and tapir

A generous swig of hypothesis became the basis for a great deal of dubious reasoning and allegation during that enforced

hibernation when we weren't playing cards

If three people are confined in a small space for any length of time, an intense yearning to cut each other's throat is liable to reveal itself, especially if the human machine is neglected Yet things worked out extraordinarily well apart from an occasional stence following different points of view

Then, just as we had reached a stage where everything had been soggy for days and were debating the advantages of an

igloo, the snow ceased and began to thaw

But the cycle of existence in our canvas hermitage continued, for rainstorms whistled around the tent. We were allowed one fine day in between the rain and the snow during which several deer appeared near the camp. I had taken the rifle on a two-mile trick over a mountain and found nothing.

On approaching the camp I met Carl and Mont brandishing smoking automatics and wishing me to the lions because I harboured the only instrument capable of punning leaping vension at a distance

We followed the trail of one which Mont claimed to have hit, but failed to locate him

In this gap between weather, we were able to make a good fire and dry the sodden mass which constituted the slepting bags and a collective wardrobe. We enjoyed a fleeting glumps of previous living. Then the rain came again Our existence repeated itself as when we had been snow bound, except for the fact that rain has a habit of penetrating where snow does not But finally the were weather seads into a light drazle and realizing that life anywhere up here would be wet most of the time, we packed and trekked over the range

Two visions during that journey stand out clearly. Cerro Hermoso, as we reached the crest of the range, and Mont slog-

ging through half a mile of "quaking bog"

With this spongy "morass" the almost immediate discovery of two small lakes at once suggested the "spectacles, from having between them a point of land like unto a nose, in front of which there was the plain or sleeping place . "

This sauced again our liberal cut of Incan lore and we spread out to watch for other landmarks of Valverde's guide. But it gave imagination a free hand and every mound and muddy creek assumed significance.

It was more pleasant to blindly eschew recent supposition that the trail and the treasure lake, to which the guide had led Brooks, were miles further to the east

Picking my way down slopes and along old river courses I found Mont sitting on a hillock surrounded by not very substantial ground. It was the sort of place where all trails meet and sooner or later the remainder of the peons came trekking along, dismay written across their faces. We wondered if Carl had fallen down a ravine, but it was not so, though perhaps they wished that fate for all three of us.

The trouble was Certo Hermoso. We were now very near to the edge of a cañon which separated us from the great mountain. The eschatology, which all Indians by instinct appeared to consider hing over it, was certainly affecting them. When they reached us, they temporarily dropped their packs and grouped together tailing in undettones. Carl had yet to appear and I wiled away the time by shooting at my Stetson and expecting not to hit it. But in the various pot shots around the Llanganaus I had been unconsciously adapting my eye and Mont's face contorted when I recovered the ventiated headeear.

Then Carl appeared with a great deal of theory and we penetrated a small patch of jungle-semb, the kind that Hollywood is so expert in applying indiscriminately to Malaya, Hawaii, or the Congo——

Emerging in open marshland overlooking the ravine which protected the bottomless escarpments of Hermoso, we caperienced another feeling of frustration. How darned black it was down there 'Protected 'was right, the problem of how to cross it was going to push the aspiran consumption sky high

cross it was going to push the aspirin consumption sky high But it still dizzled which made it difficult to steep the mind in that attitude of good fellowship which is easy to command when one has dined well in warm surroundings. For again there was to be no fire Here everything remained sodden It had been impractical to bring any of the systematicallydired fuel because of the amount required. It was the type that burnt quickly

So we finally made camp, finding consolation in the fact that we were taking part in one of the world's more interesting quests, and the watered Grapenuts that evening tasted well.

With the weather continuing very much in the same way, time dragged on and on, and our existence moved in a close cycle. Laboured inskering with a small primus stove was finally rewarded and then it was easier to think. Cooking in this manner was of course very successful but at that altitude the spirit ran quickly to low temperatures and it was an effort to encourage it back to vapousage warmth.

The long marsh grass and rough scrub had been cleated by the peons over a small area and the tent had been pitched on sloping ground facing west or away from Hermoso Twenty yards to the north the Indians had erected their own tent: They managed to dry sufficient wood over our primus to start a fire which was kety going

A hundred yards or so to the west of us was a small lake and in the late afternoons wild duck were prone to alight on it

The ultimate result was a bag of two tasty birds

High walls of the Llanganatis surrounded this marshland and mountain ranges stretched in mist beyond the caffon which, disappearing north, evolved itself from the deep ravine between ourselves and Hermoso.

And with this ravine, what now---?

We looked at it. We climbed down to its sheer sides. We essayed a trick to the south and then east along what appeared to be a natrow ridge joining Cerro Hermoto with the Llanganaiss. All this time it still raised and progress appeared to be more up and down than forward.

Our luck with the weather must have been worse than that encountered by Brooks, who had enjoyed straightforward travel until he had reached the treasure lake. Whereas his stay in the mountains had been a matter of days, our own represented weeks.

Certainly it was consoling to be so near to, though so far from, what we had gathered to be the three peaks mentioned in the guide as guarding the treasure. The atmospheric roar enveloping ourselves, and that first black snow splayed bluff with its two accompanying camel hump peaks, created the same suggestion of tempered power as might any major electric station.

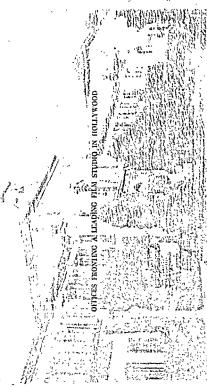
The northerly face of the black Hermoso bluff represented a perpendicular drop of many hundred feet. The western shoulder of the last camel hump gave sanctuary to a major glacier. Wisps of mist overhung the mountain most of the time. Occasionally in the early morning it would stand clearly against the ratefied air. between beautiful

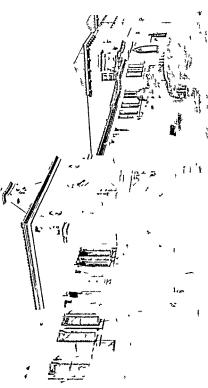
Then it would ran again Yes, the ice-cold rain was depressing Yet usually I enjoy walking in the rain, just as I enjoy
driving at night, perhaps because both experiences offer
something that seems unreal. But up here it was getting us nowhere "Washed out", was the way Brooks had described his
1912 camp when the lake had flooded it. Washed out was the
1914 camp when the received the defendent equipment. Waterproofed, yes. But we brought the water in with us. It hammered relendessly at the almost air tight flaps—ar the cases of
supplies—at the peons who huddled in their canvas "shack",
which was practically as good as our own, since it belonged to
the owner of the bantada.

With every thunder-clap around the gargantuan monster towering above them, determination to get out during the next calm seemed to cross their faces. They didn't sing. They didn't speak. If any orders were given them, they obeyed, but slowly, and with positive distress written across their faces. They were miserable.

We were sorry for them and knew what must be passing through their minds Undoubtedly details of former attempts had been handed from Indian to Indian Had they not forecast in song the cloudbursts and wind which we had experienced?

I became impatient For weeks we had awaited the opportunity to survey a possible route to this neighbouring giant. How should I be able to join Eric now? According to an arranged schedule he should have almost completed his canoes





on the banks of the Oriente Rio Villaño, less than a hundred miles from Baños

Had progress been better, perhaps we should already have proved or disproved sufficient of the historical legend to know whether it was worth further attention. Mont and Carl might have gone on attempting to push eastwards, and I should have been able to report to Enco on the advisability of a properly staged trek into the Andes which, as it happens, he ultimately made, with unbelievable success.

But what chance was there of reaching him now? I was faced with the choice of remaining perhaps stationary at this camp until the close of the wet season, or of trekking back across the snowline to the basends and then via Baflos on the long shot of catching Eric. But the shot would be too

Radio I had forgotten that part of the show. We had carried no apparatus on this particular trek into the mountains. Yet with a quick return I should be able to reach Ene through the Riobamba station and ask him to delay his departure down the Villaño.

It was hard to leave Carl and Mont in their damp, sedentary, and almost esument circumstances, but the weeks had swept by too quickly, and if I was to penetrate the Orienta with Enc's party, it was time to do something about it. So with a couple of peous I began the return treek over the Llanganatis.

I lay on my sade in the small tent shared with the two Indians, my head just poking out of the sleeping-bag. In the opposite half of our "three feet-high" shelter, forms huddled together in answer to the chill of the night. Then one of them uncoiled, supporting himself on an elbow, and stared across at me. The small lamp burning continuously threw its glare towards him and his eyes shone bright like those of an animal caught in the ald lamps.

My sleeping-bag in the shadows gave him no clue that I was awake. He rused himself further and moving on his hands came and pected into my face. I looked at him through half closed cycluds waiting for his hand to reach for my moncy belt. But perhaps it was meetly some curious urge. For after a wideeyed inspection he pushed himself back on his knees and curled into sleep

When I had first seen these fellows running up mountain slopes with hundred pound packs on their bended shoulders it had sickened me Now that their heads were turned again towards "civilization", despite the fact that they carried the same heavy swags, I could not keep up with them

The only time that I saw these peons grin in the Llanganatis

was when they had to wait for me

It had been our principle to fit them usually with no more than an eighty pound load, but they voluntarily added the extra twenty from anything lying around, despite the fact that other peons were yet "shoulder free". I expect they preferred extra weight to the idea of a possible double journey. And even on the "flats", of which there were few, it took an effort to match their gentle jog

A heavy snowfall covered the Llanganatis side of that steep ravine whete we had performed our ape like, arboreal acrobatics. So without waiting for the tent to be folded I began the crossing alone. It was better to be ahead than behind in such circumstances. I descended in moderately good time, whilst underneath the snow crackled stiffy in the way that is said to represent a temperature of "more than ten below". Then again that jungle mountainside. I solved the question of ascent by climbing up trees and swinging from high branches to the lower ones of others. I thought how appropriately my 'student-era' nickname of Kong could be applied to the anthropoidal figure climsily crashing from bough to bough.

From the highest rock near Bella Vista I scanned the nearvertical trail now behind me, and capriciously wasted ammuni tion on rock targets. Then I turned my small Mauser down the several thousand feet gap to the valley floor wondering whether gravitation would carry a buillet to the Llanganaus side. But I didn't shoot, for across the marsh bottom moved Lilliputian figures, so minute that they seemed proportionately the size of ants. These were, of course, the peons

I slid, scrambled and leaped down the furrowed slope to-

wards that first 'farm' in the hollow. It was only a corral, a small hut, and a handful of "grunt" Indians, but I mentally linked it with civilization, and after the complete bleakness of recent camping grounds it was a good sight. The sun shone pleasantly

And horses-

But they literally weren't having any

"What about these horses-ask them again-"

"They say that there are none," came the batchy coherent Spanish of the peon

"Come on, come on-tell them I'll buy a horse from themor hire it and they can have it back-but get one "

"They say that there are none"

The bent figure carrying my duffle pointed

Pelileo " "Mph

"Pelileo?"

"Mph "

"Then we shall arrive very soon "

A violent shaking of the head

"Then how far away is it?"

The peon flattened the present slight angle of the sun with a wave of his band

"Then we shall arrive at night?" "Mph "

Another small farm came and went We were crossing shrubless fields which stretched together into a plain. Beyond this was the cluster of white, pointed out as Pelileo country was in the process of fairly practical irrigation, but the streams were wide They formed a maze and occasionally we were cornered But, as the sun disappeared, we reached the end of the plain And Pelileo seemed just as far away

Then I saw why I should not reach it for several hours. From the slopes behind I had looked down the plain at this small township in the distance and the view had suggested straight travel. Yet here, at the edge of the fields, I was faced with a fifteen hundred feet descent, to reach the level of the

distant buildings

Peons were passing us on the trail

"How far is Pelileo?"
"lust a little way"

Ninety minutes later, to another batch

"Are we near Pelileo?"

"Go ahead, Señor, it is just a little way

And again

"Is this the way to Pelileo? Have we far to go?"

"Pelileo is there it is just a little way

Then ten minutes later lights and a cobbled slope. I thought of mirages in the desert. Yet it was no vision. We were there The stucky display of confectioners' stalls under yellow flares. Half open drinking booths in similar light. Police in colour-frained material chatting outside these hindar, and in one case leaning against the rump of a depressed pony for conversation with its sombrero-crowned owner. I approached this apparently amiable guardian of the local peace and explained my wants. A meal, a bath and bed. I had an idea that one of my needs over represented the requirements of the peons, but they were at least to be found food and shelter.

The uniformed Ecuadorian clicked his heels and said that it was possible. He led me through the darkened streets with their unobtrusively illuminated corners. Many of the houses were apparently of whitewashed mud. Others were of cold stone. Those in the semi dark sections of the town showed mostly bare exteriors, grilles and barricades. Very occasionally did a balcony appear to overhang the cobbles.

We crossed a square, entered a yard which enjoyed reflection of light from a window and open doorway. It was beyond this doorway that I was able to acquire a meal of poached eggs on rice. But not exactly in privacy

The soldier-cum policeman or the policeman cum soldier successfully enlarged to the growing assembly a connected version of the few details with which I had explained my sudden appearance in Pelileo, the name of which town, incidentally, always seemed to me to be pronounced Peliaro The two peons, who had come with me, supplemented with information of their own Soon there was very little room in which to eat so that I had to banish the major section of my gaping audience.

Could a horse be obtained for me in the morning, I asked through mouthfuls of nee The chatter of the assembly squatting on other trestles and benches rose to a clamour Through the doorway into the yard to where faces were pressed against the window, the thick voices echoed the word "taballo". My friend in the uniform issued an order for quiet, and this was echoed very much in the same way as it is from "yes man" to "yes man" in a movie studio.

St. Senor, a horse would be obtainable

All right, then I must have it here at six And now I should like to find a room—

Several streets from the "café' I reiterated my demands to the mother of a strong lunged offspring Meanwhile a grandmother appraised my worth from the head of a short flight of stairs She joined her daughter

"And what will you charge for this room?" I asked, after

further favourable conversation 'Uh one sucre fifty"

This represented the equivalent of ninepence

The grandmother gave her daughter an obvious Lick But it was too late.

I did, however, pay them three sucres

The sleeping bag unrolled from one corner of the bare room to the other I climbed into it feeling better for the 'cat lick' wash that I had obtained with difficulty

Stang at the high roof with my neck on the bundle of bunched up lothes, I wondered if Mont and Carl were still occupying the few square yards of tent area on which I had left them. Of had they reached the lake It was difficult to imagine the unending rain of the Lhaganniss after having taxelled most of the aftermoon through sunshine. The alleged "green hell" of the Ornati to come was said to be the result of frequent rain But not rain that froze your backbone and prevented movement. It was warm down there I thought of jungle steam and then dismissed the vision as being too "Hollywood". I should have move outselv to each Eine. First thing in the morning after

a bite I should grab a horse and head south west for Ambato on the railway line Then for the Riobamba radio station

Indians, slush, Eric, Carl, Mont, Sonny, the Oriente, Riobamba, Baños, the bactenda, New York, gipsies with fiddles and guitars at the porch, Eric, horses, peons, gold, Brooks, strange mounds-Inca tombs? Valverde

Odd things flash their way quickly across a tired brain. I rubbed my forehead

"Placed in the town of Pelileo " had run the guide So this was Pelileo

"Ask for the farm of Moya and sleep

'Sleep Yes, that was it Moya and sleep No. just sleep-

## CHAPTER XX

"ALREADY three days down Villaño stop don't attempt join us yet "

This had been part of the radio'd reply from Eric. He added that the country appeared to be devoid of anything living, and went on to say that they were using rafts instead of cances.

Rafts That accounted for their quick getaway One point stressed in Enc's condensed message was that he was passing through "foodless country"

There was little chance of catching rafts equipped with outboard motors already three days down a swilly flowing river nearly a week away. But the thought of not accompanying the party into the Oriente weighed heavily on my spirits. It was certainly true that a seimilating vision of yellow, over everything Incan, had presented the idea of the Andes to me mote attractively than the Orient. Yet now the immense heated jungles of the Upper Amazon suggested more colour than the bleak snow swept ranges that I had left. It visualized tangled greenery sprayed lightly with warm rain through which 'unnefis' would have to be cleaved with radefust in the way that we had entered the 'Bella Vista—Camp' Three' Valley And I sat in Robamba's offenng of the first the bath for ovar amonth, and thought of all the rainbow plamage in the local Museum.

To have been so close to a tributary of the Amazon and not have seen it. The probability of this struck me more forcibly than it ever had before. But the 'horse' had already 'bolted'. I should have left the mountains early.

When Enc had radio'd "don't join us jit", what did he mean? He seemed to suggest that it would be possible later leximized the Metropolitano wall map and it appeared to offer little solution to the problem of his movements. Even he had not been able to accurately label the exact patch of map in

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habited by the Ssabelas, for only rumours and exaggerated stories had filtered through to the West

I toyed with the idea of taking a small expedition of peons to the Oriente, but dismissed it almost immediately as being too costly. There seemed to be only one course to take—a return to the mountains.

Yet the more I thought about it, the more I considered that it would serve no useful purpose. The two remaining feet-rich quicks' in the Llanganatis had probably concluded their treasure hunt and, if they had not, there appeared to be little purpose in adding my posterior to their squatung contest.

There was, however, the question of the Valverde route Were they anywhere near its correct landmarks? It has been my lot to possess a parent who perpetually denounces short-cuts to anything Pethaps this brought home to me the fact that we had never begun the trek from Pelileo, neither had we ever asked for the "farm of Moya" nor "the mountain of Guapa", nor in any way followed the written guide systematically

This was something that could be done and I decided to do
it But the slip between cup and lip crept in almost at once in

the shape of dysentery This cost me ten days

On the morning of the eleventh, I sunned myself in a small garden patch in front of the Metropolitano, with glazed eyes turned across the wide station square to a small burro being driven up the cobbled main street. Apart from the disconsolate donkey, Riobamba appeared to have successfully discouraged its inhabitants from the brief travs of the day.

My right foot rested on the knee of the hotel chiev who for a few contant. To the left the Andes guant, Chimborazo, sparkled its whiteness against the blue sky. To the right several sets of railway lines supported shunted goods wagons which rested their ends in Robamba's station

Cobbles covered nearly half the station square Bare earth constituted the rest The stone building, bordering it to the left, was plain faced with high windows and narrow balconies. Two hundred yards across the square in that other plain

building, I had seen people "Holla" themselves into all colours of aggravation at the city switchboard, and violently turn handles

The same old Riobamba, but now, instead of the clatter of hammered crates and expeditionists getting in each other's hair, the hotel exuded an atmosphere of peace

Chico tapped my boot and beckoned for its partner He was an odd fellow, ten years of age, and not over four feet in height, he seemed to be mostly of Indian blood, but no one knew much of his early history He had just appeared one day with his polishing outfit and had dealt systematically with the feet of the hôtel guests. After that he had been supplied with one of the semi uniform overshirts worn by the staff. He had personality and commercialized it to the envy of his elder colleagues

"Are you Loch?"

The speaker, who approached from the doorway of the Metropolitano, was obviously a young Briton

"I have been reading of your uncle's expedition."

His name was Albert-David Albert He had recently climbed Tunguragua, and at the conclusion of this conquest had found himself a victim of the dysentery snare The Von Hartrotts of the Villa Alemana enticed back his vim and vigour after a very sick period

This offered as good a subject for conversation as if we had both enjoyed the same operation. We shook hands across my left leg to which the shee clung in case his work should be interrupted and the polishing liquids, or process, impaired

Albert had an eye for every mountain within sight. He shook his head sorrowfully when I spoke of the legendary Hermoso He did not know anyone who had reached it,

though he had heard of it

"Now there's something very special." He pointed to the twin peaked Aliar "What must that have looked like before it exploded?"

Then I remembered what I had been told Altar had oncenobody knew exactly when-been twenty seven thousand feet high, roughly "two thousand" short of Everest.

We discussed how it might be climbed for he was anxious to make the ascent It must have been at least twenty miles away. Although snow-covered, the approaching ranges seemed to slope fairly gently some distance up each peak which rose from either end of the dormant volcano like candles on the altar of a church. Hence its name.

It looked 'easy'. But I am sure it was not, for successful Ecuadorian mountaineering leaves rumour in its wake, and local lore appeared to exclude Altar's peaks from the list of the

conquered.

Whymper of the Matterhorn once climbed Chimborazo's twenty-one thousand feet Albert spoke longingly of Cotapaxi Cayambe, and Antisana, all over nineteen thousand, and appeared to be familiar with the first two Certainly he had climbed Cotapaxi, and I gathered that he had reached one of its craters

I asked him for helpful suggestions concerning the acquisi-

tion of a tent
"Have you ever tried the Army?" he inquired, nodding
towards a light grey Packard saloon, name plated with the
word "Commando". It was used by a (then) Colonel Enruque,
who was shortly to become War Minister and subsequently

assume the Presidency

No, I had not. But I approached Colonel Enriquez at his
military sanctum and was received with extreme courtesy, and
the assurance of a tent The Commandant was of medium
height, wiry and clean-shaven as were most Ecuadonians. His
whole manner spoke of vital efficiency and in appearance he
offered a slight suggestion of the late Sir Phillip Sassoon. I
should magnen that Inca blood represented part of his heitage.

Out at the Army barracks a soldier demonstrated the erection of a low two-man tent with cane supports. I signed a chit for it and drove back to the Metropolitano

"Señor, the Post Office asks that you will call A cable . ."

The cable referred to certain money which had been transferred to a bank in New York on my behalf

Money. I hadn't thought very much about it but, now that I did so, it became important I had brought a limited amount with me and instead of carrying a letter of credit had arranged for a London bank to wise me money when the time came to

quit Ecuador Envisioning travel in wild country, with Einc's full equipment and supplies, it had always seemed a secondary stem But by now I had sampled a taste of what the grage was supposed to do and pay in 'civilized' Ecuador, despite the apparently favourable rate of exchange. And it cut a hole in the small change which I had with me I was not the hotels, they knew of the expedition and I could always get credit until more money came through. It was the incidentals, and supplies

Yes, supplies After my provision box had been fitted out for this new attempt on the Valverde route, the bill presented had been depressing, and the expense connected with entirely outfitting a regular expedition came to me with sledge-hammer suddenness It was something I hadn't really appreciated before

Such facts flitted across my mind as I stood on the top floor of the Post Office building pencilling a reply to the cable that I had received

Then everything within my vision appeared to tilt and for a moment or two I 'shook' I passed my hand across my forehead and rubbed my eyes More of the dysentery bug? Ferer? No, liver perhaps Too much good food after bad—

I walked to a chair, but before I reached it the room began to sway Was it me or the room? I looked at a clerk tapping a Morse key and at two others writing No, it must be me

But almost at once it became obvious that the whole building was swaying and shaking with a machine gun rumble somewhere below. The mud walls and morar of the town had never unduly impressed me and I wondered how much of this they could stand. Yet there appeared to be a certain elasticity about them and the earth temors had no effect.

The odd part about the whole quake was that the building, or at least the floor that I was on, awayed nylendly and yet the clerks merely stared blandly across the room. I wondered if they had many such termors, as I thought of the geological history of the Andes Later I read that on that very same day the earth had shaken in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermour, Massachuestra, Rhode Ishand, Connectiont, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvanu, Delaware, Maryland, Ohlo, Wext Virgiana, Indiana, Micheyan, Illinois and Wiscoosin, as well Wirgiana, Indiana, Micheyan, Illinois and Wiscoosin, as well

as in Washington, D C, and the Provinces of New Brunswick, Ontains and Quebec In what was apparently known as the Doucet region of Quebec, the tracks of the Canadian National Railway had twisted and a crack had appeared two hundred and fifty feet in length and forty deep A woman was reported to have been scared to death at Watertown, N Y It was said that in some States old houses were cracked, but there was alleged to be no general damage

"Placed in the town of Pelileo '

Yes, here I was, on a horse—a bit bony perhaps but, with a leg at each corner, it looked functionable—all set and ready to go

" Ask for the farm of Moya '

Did anybody know Moya? In bannada Moya? Nobody appeared to, although each questioned face bore the look of a cat that had slipped three mice down its gullet. They emanated a complete air of passive ignorance. Yet one of the bland faces, glanced at off guard, wore a smirk.

Well, I knew that my appearance was "vaudeville" and that the horse was also come. But was it only these things? How many people before me had alpined up into a saddle between a rolled tent and a heavy duffle in Pelileo's town square and asked for Moya? I imagined very few during the life-time of these local yokels Yet possibly every Indian knew the first landmarks of the guide by heart Perhaps they didn't Perhaps they weren't even smiling behind those serene faces. But usually peons were so voluntary with their suggestions. Well, I didn't care very much. It was late afternoon and I had arranged to leave Pelleo at this time of the day so that my movements might fit in with the schedule of the guide. I picked up the reins and signified my intended departure to the animal. There was no response.

Now horses and I usually get along well together, but this was like trying to encourage Gibraltar to move a few feet to the left or right The reluctant nag was evidently a 'homelover' for he stared towards the yard where he had just concluded a lessurely half hour

I exercised all motions calculated to entice a horse into

action and nearly stripped my tongue making the usual "tchk-tchk" sounds to which co-operative horses react. But quiet resistance was apparently the theme of this animal's immediate policy. It gave an indigestive yawn and exhaled between its front legs.

The set expressions around me broke There was much hilarity It seemed that I had "hired a pup"

So this was what the poins had waited to see Apparently the horse was well known. I made efforts to get another but the chala horse-owners of Pelleo must have preferred this entertainment. They asserted that there were no others to be had

Yet to my surprise, half an hour later, the animal was encouraged to cross the square and, after a short halt beside the Pelileo's centre of worship, the last cobble slipped behind the pony's heels and I climbed away from the town.

"Do you know Moya ? Where is the bacienda Moya?
There is a farm somewhere named Moya, do you know it?"

And always I received the same reply until two incredibly stupid peons with the usual yellow basin hats and fided bandso hanging about their necks, at least gave me hope Having questioned them more mechanically than intentionally, it shook me to hear a "Sr, senor," through my disgruntled yawn

"You know Moya? Then how may I teach it? Where does it lie?"

"Over there."

"Where?"

"There" They waved towards the north-east

The only habitation in the direction which they had

suggested was an Indian shack a couple of miles away I approached it. There appeared to be no one inside, but a distant loitering peon, with apparently no immediate occupation, looked as if he and the shack bore some relationship to each other.

"Is this Moya?"

He stared at me

"Moya?" He mouthed the word very slowly, and then pointed dumbly up the mountain slope. I rode on But not easily The pony from the start had considered the whole adventure a bad business. And if this species of quadruped could register expression with its features, then it wore a look of martyrdom and intense distaste.

Another peon. It was like finding crystal water in a desert,

or money in an old coat pocket-"Is Moya near here?"

He nodded Ha, getting hotter, but by now I had reached the stage where I was a little tired of Moya

"Is it that way, is it this way, is it here—where is it?" I accompanied each fevered query with much gesticulation.

"Here" He mumbled the word still staring vacantly

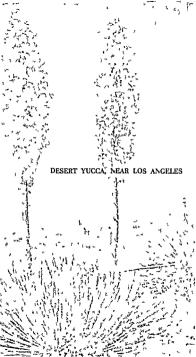
"Right here, on this very spot?"

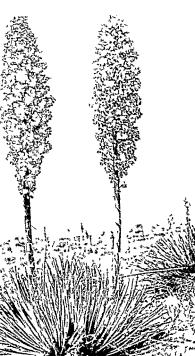
He modded It was an open part of the plain without much gradient, which once might have harbourde a farm or—to give this last informant benefit of the doubt—possibly represented the former site of one, but it took a liberal peppering of imagination to convince myself of this

What did it matter anyway, I argued, even if it wasn't the place I must have travelled in the right direction. It was now practically dark, and if I did camp a couple of miles either way, would it make all that difference? Would it? That was a question which I dismissed at once. But then again, I demanded of myself, was this being systematic? I looked at the darkness below me and the distant lights of Pelileo, and decided that I should have to conclude it as being so.

The armchat saddle with its bulky load of a tent and a heavy duffle slid quickly off the animal's back as I unstrapped the girth band. The pony shook itself and gave a rushing exhalation of relief. Meanwhile I untied and erected the tent as quickly as I could manage it, kicking myself for not having paid closer attention to the soldier's demonstration of its fool proof qualities, and for not having brought a flash lamp. It was now quite dark and old.

Anchoring the pony to a long rope which I had brought for the purpose, I decided against lighting a fire and cooking a tin of Heinz beans. Instead I climbed under the rug and chewed chocolate that tasted like burnt cocoa. I made a mental note never to buy more of the same———





Ask for Guapa tents pitched on rafts rain, rain we'll climb it together one day blood, yes dysentery to hell with you Carl, that wasn't your bullet top of the world it's a hundred and two floors

This time I wasn't asleep I lay awake all night, or all the year it seemed, trying to keep warm. This was the result of trying to do without the sleeping bag, Good recommendation for its makers I made another mental note to acquaint them

with the contrast of being without it at this altitude.

But nothing could stop time moving on, and finally I gave
up my mental mutrering and came out of my open-eyed coma
to find daylight and a cold wind sweeping the camp. Things
assumed their correct perspective again. The pony was
munching wet grass complacently I went to give him a morning pat and then stayed my hand in disgust. Disgust at myself
—disgust at the people who had lired me the horse. That
part of its backbone, usually covered by the saddle, pushed a
blood matted spongey mess through the wretched animal's
hide. With my weight and that of the saddle pressing on this
hornble sore, the pony must have suffered exeruciating agonies
climbing the hills with me the evening before. No wonder it
had been unco-operative.

This obviously was as far as the animal was going to travel Perhaps I could return it to the lower slopes and find some peon to take it back. But what of the duffle? A peon could be found to carry that 'Yet would he? I had forgotten the dread that all the peons felt towards the distant Llanganatis He wouldn't come alone. Then I'd get a couple. Well then food—they would have to ear If the length of stay in the mountains was to be indefinite, a large supply of their pinole flour must be obtained.

There seemed to be every obstacle. I had no wish to return to Pellico. I had anterpated following the Valverde guide to my best ability, at the same time keeping a hawk eye on Cerro Hermisso which I expected to be within at least twenty miles of the latter part of the trait. And I should conclude my whole examination of Valverde's 'hypothesis' by joining up with Carl and Mont, if the rains had lessened.

But now, rather than waste time over peons in Pelileo, and

further supplies for them, I considered continuing the trel as I had started it . alone

The duffle resembled a torso bigger than my own, with all the boots and etceteras stuffed into it. Every time I looked at it, and at the mountains shead, it sapped my strength. No, it was physically beyond me to crawl up the Andes with that on my back.

So that in any case I should have to return to Pehleo, but there was nothing to stop me going as far as I could, atmed with chocolate and the tent.

And leave the duffle to be plundered by peons---?

There were obstacles to every plan. If only I had lifted the saddle and examined the horse more thoroughly before leaving If only I had arranged for peons and their extra food in Polileo Or better still in Riobamba, where the dread of the mountains would probably be neglectible If—

There was nothing to stop me doing half a day's further trek along the trail followed by Valverde. The pony would be better off at this camp eating alone than in the hands of its owners. And the duffle and tent I would risk for that short time

I staked the pony's rope on the other side of the tent so that it could munch another wide circle of grass, and, with the tenaming half packet of burnt-cocoa' chocolate, I climbed the hill above to look for 'the mountain of Guapa', the next landmark of the guide

There were several suspects in sight. It kept hammering at my brain that it would be inducious to have set out to be systematic and not hold to that idea. I looked down the slopes beyond the camp and in the distance saw a stray peon. Yes, it was worth the trip down again and in a few minutes I had passed my mountain headquarters with the poop sentinel cating cheeffully, and eventually collared the major.

"Guapa la arra de Guapa? I demanded But he only leered with a thick thread of saliva bridging his lips and evi dendy thought me droll. One of his mates, however, was more helbful. The fellow had appeared from a nearby hill

"That is Guapa" He pointed to a mountain almost to the south-east

I disputed that if anywhere it must be north-east, but his

attitude was 'take it or leave it', and he would not accompany me

So I had passed Guapa? If the truth were known I had probably passed Moya also, on my way from Pelileo

I walked to Guapa The sun had risen to a respectable angle when I reached it Now what?

" look to the East so that thy back be towards the town of Ambato"

Yes. I could see Ambato from where I stood—beyond

Pelileo I placed my back towards it and seemed to be looking north-east.

"from thence thou shalt perceive the three peaks of Llanganatis in the form of a triangle"

But I couldn't Bad mathe anathra at a mathematical in the state of th

But I couldn't. Bad weather overhung the mountains ahead of me The next stipulation in the guide was that the hopeful treasure hunter should look for a "forest and a clump of trees which are called the arrows"

Thooked at all the scrub land and small bush and "perceived" such landmarks in half a dozen places. Then I looked again at the bad weather overhanging the Llanganatis. If I did find another really strong horse and one or two husby peons in Pelileo to continue with my system, could I dodge that weather in any part of those ranges? Were Carl and Mont still sitting in that rain soaked tent where I had left them? It was said that the warm rain of the Orinite hardly dissuringed movement, and Enc had intimated that it would be possible to join his party later.

Since his 'radio' already a fortnight had passed If I was going to exhaust what few funds I had in hand on organizing a teck somewhere, it might just as well be to the Orients which I had it seen. My mind reached for something which it usually prefers to avoid. A quick decision. The Western Brothers could have categorized me at once.

I gave up the Valverde trail

## CHAPTER XXI

AT half past five in the morning the streets looked cold The car was cold too, but it was comfortable and it amused me to realize that in little over an hour I should literally step from this last contact with easy existence, to the back of a mule

In no time at all it seemed that all signs of Quito were obscured by the dust from the rear wheels of this saloon as we speed down into a quiet valley with ferns, a running stream and tall trees. At last I was on my way to join Ente's party, and the feeling of relaxed peace of mind came to me strangely after all the effort, disappointment and worry that had preceded this departure.

As the road through this cave of fernery became rocky, and twisted more than ever, I thought of my very secondary attempt to track down the preliminary landmarks of the Valverde route. It was still most difficult not to feel attracted to its legendary quest, but at least I was on the way to something that I knew was definitely there. The Orient Eric had spoken of penetrating the Llanganatis at the conclusion of his work on the Amazon thoutaires, depending on my report of our primary survey. This meant that it was practically definite that he would finally attempt the Valverde route and attempt it properly. Eric usually consumpated his ideas

My mind flitted back to the tedious return trek from the "mountain of Guapa" to Pellileo, leading the raw backed horse. I thought of the smirks of the local inhabitants at my reappearance two days after having farewelled them. I could see the little Ecuadorian tailor, who had litted the horse for me, upbraiding the aged owner and his wife in 'machine-gun' Spanish

And now as I bumped away from Quito, my thoughts returned to the time when I had hurtled from boulder to boulder down that 'Pelileo Ambato' road Hewn from a cliff

of sheer rock along both sides of a deep valley, its unbordered curves had swept me with more than my share of fatalism. My liver had received its great awakening as that ancient "flivver" steering made frequent contact with the projecting corners

It had been an alarming ride My vision had invariably refocussed just as the car had bounced to the edge of some disconcerting chasm, or had hung over another death trap brink Judging from the burned-out wrecks far below, other cars had passed this way

Anyone who has traversed that 'Pelileo Ambato' road will testify to its exciting possibilities. And with THAT DRIVER. they could go home and write about it-

THAT DRIVER! Bare footed, thick lipped, unhatted, he could hardly reach those metal projections and that piece of wire, all of which collectively constituted the controls When we had scattered our second set of peons and practically pinned a couple of burros against the rock face, THAT DRIVER really went to town

It had seemed that the vehicle lacked any effective mechanism with which its progress might have been allayed And he revelled in it-

Switching to neutral as we approached yet another 'hairraiser' he would drive like a fire-chief to that right angled bend, with one casual finger on the wheel This had been too much And with the bumping, thumping,

and heaving, it had been like riding in a runaway tank

Then had come a vision flavouring of Detroit and I had offered up postponed supplication

Yet the two cars had somehow failed to meet head on They had merely stripped each other's wings and bounced away in a mess of tangled metal

But in time we had managed to reach Ambato and after a meal and a bath at the pleasant German guest house Villa Hilda, I had taken the train to Outto

How ruggedly desolate the country had seemed after leaving Ambato That little cobbled town, scene of one of the greatest Incan Civil wars, was an odd mixture of antiquity and civilization.

They had 'talkies' there In a packed rustic hall, I had seen

Anna Neagle in one of her earlier pictures During the more emotional scenes superfluous sound effects had been provided by whooping peons There had been much commotion but apparently no 'chucker-out'.

In Ambato I had been led with pride to the mausoleum of Ecuador's most brilliant unicteenth century writer, Juan Montalvo, famous for his attacks on the tyrannous principles of Garcia Moreno, gargoyle in the political affairs of Montalvo's

day The shrine had been impressive-

There is more in Ambato than appears to a stranger merely wandering about the streets. Having achieved the firendship and hospitality of its citizens you are liable to be led to amazing modern homes hidden away behind unpretentious shopfronts. Of course Ambato has its "modern residential section" to the north of the town, and of this the Villa Hilda had been part.

The Quito train had climbed out of the station yards into a barren, dry, and volcanic country. It was a ravaged brown, and I had considered that the great white Cotapaxi, climbed by my recent acquaintance. Albert, had probably been responsible. A lonely lake had lain amidst this desolation, and I had mentally shivered as I had looked at its surroundings. Could civilization ever claim that territory?

The Guayaquil Quito Railway carries American "Supervisers" I had found one aboard who had accompanied us from Guayaquil to Riobamba He had asked me how the expedition

was getting along

I had told him that a 'section' were plotting what they could see of the Llanganatis through the rain and snowstorms, and that the main party was mapping the Oriente I had added that it was my intention to join them as soon as possible

"Finny country, in there," he had said "One of my mates who used to work on this rulroad—Sam Souder—took his pension and went in Then there was an Australian—Kangaroo Brown—he went in too They stay there. Some of them go native . ."

At lunch time we had reached Latacunga and once again I had been reminded of Valverde and the Incan treasure. In the archives of this town his "guide" had been preserved for years,

until it had been stolen. Latacunga was the usual type of small Ecuadona town. The streets were both dusty and cobbled like the main square. The semblance of a fine building apparently semi-completed had lent a definite air of self respect to its surroundines.

Washed mud-walled houses lined the streets. There had been a very small Hotel Londres which had appeared to give good meals. It had never discovered whether the proprietor had any identification with London. The big full blown Metropolitano. Hotels of Ecuador had carried a Union Jack on their menus because their originator was from Gibraltar.

After Latacunga we had appeared to travel between dormant volcanoes The train had again climbed and it had become colder and colder.

Then we had finally descended into warm green fields and passed between eucalyptus trees and the farms of Machachi.

Where had I heard that name before? Oh, I remembered. I had seen it on the mineral water bottles So there, also, were famous springs

Once again the half breed cholor had clamoured around the straming train and wheedled passengers to buy oranges, pine-apples, bread rolls, biscuits, meat, and those strange baked animals which had carried too close a resemblance to large rats

The American "Supervisor" had finally elucidated: "Cujuss . . . they are guinea pigs"

Yet the ingrained idea that they were some species of at had refused to fade and I had preferred to postpone further feasing But still these thick shirted, fell-hatted women had begged and coaxed at the carriage window. Behind each one half a dozen baskets with slaeble contents, mostly fruit, had lain in the dust and an occasional Indian dog had slunk around sniffing

One misguided Indian woman, whom I had not seen make a sale, had concentrated on my window with the hope of encuraging a few nations (sixteen to a penny) from the "rich grago". Yet recollection of the remaining small change in my money belt had make me smile ronically. Like Billy Bunter I had been awaiting that bank draft.

You approach Quito over flattish country, occasionally sighting well built residences suggesting the large town that is ahead The fields for a time are rather like many in France Finally the train slows down and curves round a bend into the Quito railway yards, and you realize that the town is mostly above you Solid and substantial buildings stand side by side to the usual type with mud walls

Presenting myself with the choice of either the Savoy or Metropolitano, I had decided to live at the first and eat at the second The idea was not mine but I had tried it, subsequently concluding that I preferred it the other way

Outto is said to be built in the basin of a valley but its streets run mostly up and down hills

In 1012 the population of the town was estimated at one hundred and four thousand, as against Guayaquil's hundred and twenty thousand

Antonio Pons-set up as Provisional President by the Ecuadorian Army during the August 21st revolution (which had greeted my arrival in the country)-had been in residence when I had reached Outo

His imposing white palace faced the Plaza de la Independencia---

To approach it, through the Plaza, one passed by ornate iron pateways into a square of splendidly kept lawns and shrubbery with occasional tall palm trees rising nearly to the height of the Independence Monument at the hub of all these sunlit path ways

Every species of Indian-some with 'ten gallon' straw hats-and occasional veiled figures in black, had moved slowly around the gardens Figures had relaxed into sleep on the warm benches

Most of the less dormant babitues of this sun haven had gazed frequently towards the palace Perhaps they were mentally toying with incidents of Ecuador's stormy political past Perhaps their minds had been a blank Who could analyse the thoughts of those glazed eyed losterers in the Plaza de la Independencia?

Independence Ecuador's independence dates from the Battle of Pichincha, May 29th, 1822, and it has been hardly the quetest Latin American republic. Furthermore it is estimated that three fourths of its population are Indians, one fifth mixed and only a small faction white Education is not as farreaching as it might be Only adults who can read and write can vote.

Ecuador returned to a constitutional form of government on September 10th, 1918, when a National Assembly of fifty-four members, elected by the people in August began its session. The Assembly by unanimous vote continued President Ayora in Office, and on March 27th, 1929, elected him Constitutional President (without right of re-election) for five years. He assumed office on April 12th. The new constitution was proclaimed on March 29th and on May 7th the Assembly established a cabinet of six ministers appointed by the President, The Minister of the Interior succeeds to the President; If a vacancy occurs. The Senate of thirty two members is elected by social groups for four years, the Chamber of Deputies thirty six members are elected for two years by popular vote of the provinces.

On February 6th, 1934, President Roosevelt accepted the invitation to act as arbitrator with negotiating commissions to be sent to Washington in order to effect a settlement of the century-old boundary dispute concerning ownership of the vast territory on the Upper Amazon Ijing between the Mortona, Marañon, Napo and Pilcomayo Rivers The two commissions incidentally have not yet reached complete accord

Ecuador, though rated as an original member of the League of Nations, did not qualify until September 28th, 1934 when she informed the Council by cablegram that she had ratified the covenant and desired to join the League

The country issued a decree on September 24th, 1927, for bidding the entry into the country of all foreign elergymen, irrespective of religious faith

An eight hour labour law and one concerning model child labour were put into effect on January 1st, 1929

By invitation of the Government, Professor Edwin W Kemmerer of Princeton University, with a staff of American experts went, in October, 1926, to Ecuador, and after four months' study presented plans for the reorganizing of the finances of the country. As a result the Banco Central was opened on June 181, 1927, with a capital of ten million sucres (just under a million dollars) to which was given the exclusive privilege of issuing banknotes for fifty years. The bank on June 19th, 1934, had a note circulation of forty million one hundred thousand sucres, with a gold cover of seventeen million tiree hundred thousand, and foreign assets of ten million six hundred thousand sucres, a cover of 67 3 per cent, the legal reserve being 12 81 per cent.

A budget law, new taxation, and revised customs duties were amongst the twenty five reforms recommended and adopted About thirty million dollars of American capital had been invested in the country. The sucre originally at 48 6 American cents, had fallen in value to less than half, in February, 1947, it was stabilized at twenty cents gold. It was maintained in 1945 at 10 30 sucres to the dollar.

The actual budget for 1933 was balanced at nearly forty two million succes, that for 1934 at nearly forty nine million, and for 1931 at something over fifty million succes

On February 9th, 1932, Ecuador abandoned the gold standard, and this suspension was ultimately extended.

Although I had found all these facts accessible, no one could convey to me the exact age of Quuto. Its anticupur confounded the Spanish chroniclers four hundred years ago. For Quito was in the possession of a lost race—the Caras—bifur the Incas conquered it.

One has only to mount a side of Quito's Andean basin to appreciate the attraction of its position at the hub of so much fertility

Tribes must have fought with all they had for existence in this near Utopia, since the earliest existence of man in South America. For every day in Quito the sun shines, and its height of roughly ten thousand feet above the sea "softens" its climate, despite the fact that the equator "crosses" the country only a few miles to the north. In Quito it seems never too hot, never too cold. Oue's sense of well being and friendship cowards one's neighbour in the ideal climate of this town is so definite, that frequently I would wonder at the fact that war,

bloodshed and revolutions had taken place amongst these quiet cobbled streets where I walked

As I have already intimated one seemed to either climb or descend in Quito Above the nerrow pavements, tall windows opened on to petite though finely architectured balconies. The houses were occasionally to be found in faded pinks or blues, but mostly they were 'white', their roof tops forming steps where the houses occupied levels below or above one another on Quito's inclines. Grilles covered most of the lower windows, but the doorways surprised me. They were usually so high. Bucket shops and every possible form of business occupied the ground floors. There seemed to be no definite slum quarter. The poor appeared to live beside or beneath those cutzens more comfortably provided for. Outto has of course in sevelental section on the outsturs of

came has or course its residential section on the outsiaris of
the town 'The trams—yes, Quito has them—run out there
And in a country where one has the impression of so much
poverty, at amazed me to see so many luxurious limousines
and dwelling places amongst the fine avenues of this area. It
had seemed that practically every country in the world had its
representative here and that each and every one of them had
built in their own individual style. If you can mentally take a
yellow schloss, something in modernistic Moorish, and an
architectural fantasy with minarets in faded blue, you might
manage to create a fair idea of the unorthodox yet somehow
attractive scenes that represent Outo's 'Wetter quarter'

The Savoy and Metropolitano had both been within easy walking distance of the Plaza de la Independencia but the Metropolitano was obviously the social, and apparently the political, rendezwous

Every "train day" (that is to say when the trains arrived from the coast) most excellent 'sea food' dishes would be prepared in the cocktail bar of the Metropolitano Prawns and crab in spixed tomato juice, oysters, and other Linck hancks filled the bar in the evening and about eleven a m. the following day. It was on Sunday mornings, that the concoctor of these palatible dishes had really excelled himself. In the afternoons the cocktail room had been crowded for "tea". Yes, 'Regish' tea and tosast, and amongst many it had appeared to be a ritual

"Lenador for its ice-cream"

Highly-coloured giant sized ice-creams done in that special way that the country has

So that with a "sweet tooth" such as my own, it was inevitable that I should have been found in the Metropolitano, at

four o'clock every afternoon

The reason for the delay of my trek to the Oriente had been simple though important. I had learnt sufficient of the proposed venture to know that it was to cost me more hard cash than I had in hand And I had been faced with the necessity of provisioning for this trip which perhaps would enable me to strike Eric in the approved 'Stanley-Livingstone' manneror perhaps not

On this vague journey into jungle country (where Gonzalo Pizarro in 1541 had led 300 soldiers, 4,000 Indians and about 5.000 head of live stock, to ultimately return with only a few Spanish survivors and clothing in shreds) I had intended to take enough food to keep me going, if the necessity arose, for some months. And patmeal had seemed to provide the solution Gonzalo Pizarro described his movements in the Oriente as being "with much labour and hunger" I intended to eschew any semblance of the latter But then such intentions arrive

casily-

Through the medium of Mr Juan Clark of the American Mission I had discovered that I should be able to "mule it" part of the way over the Andes My first aim was to reach the Upper Amazon tributary known as the Rio Napo According to Eric's latest radio reports, he and his party were now well down a more southern tributary, the Curaray, which apparently joined the Napo in Peru They were already well over two hundred miles from the Andean edge of the Oriente and at least three hundred miles from Quito

It seemed that Eric's idea was to cross from the Curaray to the Napo at a point where it was reckoned that they were "nearest" to one another Then, if I reached the Napo and travelled down st, I should meet him I hoped It had appeared to be a long shot but was worth trying Eric intended to travel ahead of the others for a short distance without wireless equipment after leaving the Curaray, so that it had

not been much use waiting for radio reports that he had reached the Napo

As the days had worn on and a very necessary medium to the journey refused to show up, I had begun to haunt the Banco Central constantly asking the same question, always receiving the same reply

"No, it has not arrived yet, señor"

This had been beyond me, for it had all been arranged before I left England

Selling my sevolver, I had wired again with the proceeds and had waited resignedly. Even the hotel creates had seemed to sense that I was temporally not in a position to "up". They had become cheeky and disinclined to give service. In Ecuador the dollar is a magic carper but without that carpet you fall and the bump is hard. I had creatiny wished Enc would turn up with his treasury. But then, I had reflected, his Orients tip would be over and there would be little point to my trek.

Whilst waiting for my monetary lifebuoy, I had again met David Albert After a few preliminary words of greeting he had flushed and said halingly "Tim in a rotten position—stuck —stoney—could you lend me a few dollars to wire New York—""

I had laughed and told him how I, too, was waiting patiently for something to appear at the bank. But I had an idea. The Riobamba "station" had frequently radiod' New York for the expedition. So telling Albert that somehow I should get his message through I had him write it out on a telegraph form. Then borrowing his remaining cataor, I had wired it to Riobamba, adding what I considered to be sufficient explanation to the radio "owner-operator".

The privacy obtainable with cables is naturally not always possible with radio. Despite the fact that the transmission had been directed to another American station, somehow our expedition headquarters in New York had tuned in on it also

Albert's message had discussed a certain agreement with the addressee, but the Riobamba station, misunderstanding, had attached my signature to the radio

Months later when I returned to New York, I was greeted

with a stupid denunciation concerning an alleged secretive agreement between myself and the person to whom Albert had radio'd It seemed that I was some sort of expedition spy. I told Albert of this when I eventually met him in London

"And unfortunately that radio didn't help me," he said
"The person to whom I sent the message had left the
States——"

One day I had had an offer of a drive to Ibarra, Ecuador's most northerly town The road hewn roughly from the hills had wound round chiffs and here again were usions of burned-out flivriers at the bottom of ravines. To me, the factor of safety along this road was less than on others. We had stopped ar Otavallo, a small 'partly-cobbled' town where the Indians were said to be "of a fine type" and the "purest descendants of the Ineas." Their moses had been slightly more aguline and their features as a whole consequently sharper. But if I had not been told to watch for these points I should not have noticed them. These people had worn the usual 'yellow basin' hats, the inevitable faded panchos and had been invariably barefooted

We had crossed the Equator at the bottom of a gorge so deep that the old car had difficulty in climbing the other side No notice had marked this "menagerie lion" as I had heard it

once called

Passing snow-capped Cayambe, of 19,534 feet, we had subsequently reached lbarra, which exuded what I thought was a melancholy atmosphere, despite a surprisingly colourful set of gardens with every national piece of shrubbery represented

Ibarra possessed large barracks Could it have been in case Colombia ever looks to the South? The claims of Colombia

and Ecuador were said to conflict

The town had looked like one which had flourished for a week and was now resting. No doubt it would again have its day. Ecuador had a definite future despite the fact that it was inclined to carry you back into the centuries.

Returning to Quito, I had met Albert again and we had held a conference over the finance question, and had even reached the stage where we had placed our valuables on a table and, with senous faces, had weighted our principles. But neither of

us had known the Spanish for "hock shop" so that we had decided to wait and hope

Next day when I had walked up the corner steps of the magnificent Banco Central, I had been overcome with surprise. The money had arrived And as I had arranged, an equal amount had also been placed in the Guayaquil bank.

Despite the fact that Eirc had a great deal of film equipment with him in the Oriunt, I had wanted to record my trek from Quito So that I had appreached a camera shop in Quito's "arcade" and had inquired for prices One sixteen millimetre "Ensign" had appeared to be going very cheaply and I had bought it. But a few minutes later a representative of the shop had come bowing and scraping to say that there had been some mistake. The camera's price was many times the amount that I had been charged

This had seemed possible but I could not afford to buy it at its new price

But since the establishment had put me to "great inconvenience", the representative had pressed, would I not borrow the camera to take a few shots of Quito

No, I had told him, I would hire it for a day if they cared to let me have it Would they?

No They wouldn't hire it, but they would be pleased for me to use it

I had no wish for such a concession and had again pressed them to hire it to me. Then when the firm had refused I had stupidly given way and accepted it "on loan", signing a slip to say that it was temporarily in my possession.

Having 'taken' a few local 'shots', I returned it to them almost at once With my thoughts more on the Oriente trip than on the camera. I had omitted to ask for a receipt.

The long and short of this business had been that, unknown me, one of the salesmen had stolen the 16 M.M "Ensign" and, when questioned by his company, had produced the original slip that I had signed and alleged that I was still "in boscession".

Months afterwards, when I had left Ecuador, this shop presented Eric with a bill for the camera and created a lot of trouble, attempting to damn the expedition as "sharks" Fortunately Albert had been with me on the occasions when I was lent and had returned the "Ensign", and was able to straighten everything out.

Whilst I had been arranging my trip, the hotel manager had asked whether I had ever seen a bull fight. He had said that there was one on that afternoon, a really funny one, he was sure that I should enjoy it. I had asked Albert to come along. But his 'bull fighting' appetite had been sated in Spain, and he disliked seeing blood splashing an arena.

I had told him that this would not be possible at this comic show which we were to see. The manager had said that everyone went for a laugh and that there were to be clowns

Usually I regard clowns, well meaning as they might be, with the same feeling that I regard village bazaars. But it had seemed to suggest a diversion and we had both gone

Yes, there were the clowns One had pretended to shave the other, complete with apron, lather brush, chair, and magazine And then the hull had been excurred to the result.

And then the bull had been encouraged into the ring—

Its horns had been cut, but it had bounded aggressively across the arena having summed up the situation in no time

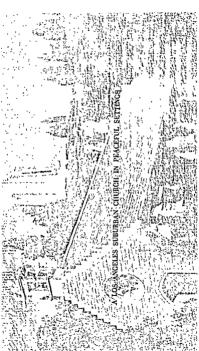
at all
But I had not noticed (perhaps because I had not looked for it) until the end of the afternoon that as each bull came snorting

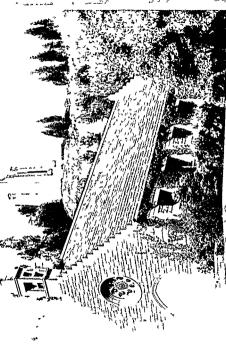
it) until the end of the atternoon that as each bull came snorting through the "gate", a small dart had been plunged into its back just to allay any bovine reverie In a moment both barber and victim were in the air. How

they had managed to avoid injury, whilst being tossed in this manner, was beyond my reasoning

The two clowns had then knelt down with their hind quarters towards the bull and their forcheads to the ground, meanwhile signaling the animal with their hands. The animal had been a little perplexed at the apple being put on the table or readily, but soon it had taken the obvious course and had charged them. I had expected a couple of broken necks but apart from being bowled through the dust, the clowns had sermed "sphole".

Then there had been a momentary interval whilst barbs with wooden handles, bound with coloured streamers, had been handled to the two men in the ring





Surely, I had thought, they weren't going to "prick" the animal with Lese things-

But they were. And every time a clown had managed to plunge a barb into the shoulder of this dismayed animal, blood had squirted, the crowd had cheered and roared with hilarity and the bull had frothed at the mouth looking more wretched every minute

Eight banderillas had eventually hung from its shoulders Again there had been a short interval during which the animal had alternatively stood and run about the ring, attempting to rid itself of these be-ribboned torture sticks, each one about three feet in length What was to happen then? I had supposed, perhaps

stupidly, that someone would come and take the barbs from the animal But, instead, a matador had appeared with a pink capa and sword and had proceeded to bow to each section of the audience

There had been many sections And the bull had taken no notice, being too concerned with its own discomfiture

The matador had strutted up to the animal, which had stood perfectly still Then he had bounded around it, always drawing his heels together in military fashion after every leap The bull had refused to respond.

This had gradually become too much for the matador He had been encouraging the animal for several minutes and had no intention of appearing ridiculous. He had given the animal a poke with his sword. It had looked blearily in his direction and had stepped towards him. The matador had leapt and bounced like an acrobat, eventually returning to his former posture

He had played the bull in this fashion for five minutes, first prodding it and then skipping away if it as much as looked at him This part of the performance had been tagged as part of the clowning, by the audience about me. But if the matadox had originally considered introducing humorous touches to

his act his mind was obviously now on another track. An extra step in the direction of this agile figure had proved the bull's undoing and the sword had been run messily through its shoulder

It had swayed dunkenly about to the accompaniment of wild shricks from the audience who had obviously been delighted. It had given a shake and a heave and had managed somehow to throw the sword into the air. A shower of blood had followed—

The matador had retrieved his sword and, after a few more capers, had plunged the blade again into the shoulder, to the hilt. This time the animal had been too weak to do anything about it and instead had veered drunkenly around the ring. With screams of amusement Indians had begun to drop into the arena from behind the barriers and had rushed to pull its tail. Feebly it had tried to shake them off but had been unable to do so and they had only pulled harder. Then when it had collapsed slowly to the ground, they had jumped onto its back, made suggestive and coarse gestures, whilst a crowd had attempted to pull it around through the dust, again by its tail.

Then somebody had appeared with a small chisel like instrument and this had been plunged between its ears. They didn't kill it immediately. They had had to continue hammer into the instrument in

Finally the brute had died, horses had come to drag it away, the matador had bowed again to every section, hats had been thrown into the ring and the first of six bulls, which were all despatched in the same way, had been hauled out at a canter, through the dust

I had left thinking of the Spanish Inquisition, and reflecting on the fate of the Incas that had been Conquest prisoners. It had been odd to realize that such hospitable people as poured from the Plaza Del Toros could be so barbaric.

Another regular Quito social event is the first night of any new film. The town's elite pay so many enterior more and look smugly down upon the lesser audience from more sumptious positions raised a foot above the stalls at their side

Here you see splendid uniforms, much cosmetic beauty, and evidence of heavy sales in peroxide. Or can someone convince me that this section of South America does breed a department of natural blondes.

But instead of going to a film I had accompanied Albert to Outo's famous old theatre. El Teatro Sucre, to see a visiting musical show. The Spanish danseuse had thumped rather heavily about the stage but in all the show had been colourfully costumed and good.

In the middle of it I had noticed two elderly ladies in the adjoining box attempting to catch my eye, and I had recognized them as the two "Whoopee Queens", who had so hospitably produced aguadiente for Sonny and myself, after our hot ride

to Baños.

Spanish actors and especially comedians are most expressive and though I could follow only a few actual words of this rapid-fire humour on the stage, it had given me one long laugh. The Teatro Sucre, which must have been originally built as an opera house, had put on a splendid entertainment

I thought of all these things as I bumped and joited away from Quito to my rendezvous with the Oriente bound mule

It had been quite the most colourful town that I had seen But I came out of my reverse now for the sun had reached a respectable angle and the car was in open country climbing

higher and higher. Then, as I began to slip back to further reflections on Ouito, we stopped beside a straw-thatched hut in the middle of a

bare windy paramo on the shoulder of the range Fifty yards further on the motor track came to a dead end.

So this was where I was to leave the great civilization behind me.

But the mule had not arrived-

I paid the car driver; he dumped out my duffle, and I followed the Indian who carried it into the hut.

## CHAPTER XXII

THE thatched hut was unlike any others that I had been in and its wills appeared to be also of 'thatching' instead of the usual stones cemented together with mud It was one of three or four and I killed time waiting for that mule by carrying out a half bourly parade of inspection from door to door. Or should I say that the inhabitants conducted this "tour." For they would all (though there were few to each hut) pour out mio the chilly air and grin knowingly at each other, always managing to edge behind me and pass unnatelligible remarks in their own peculiar slang Perhaps it was Quedua I don't remember any of it, but I doubt if this Orients language extended so far west

As is usual around native buts, dogs slunk about with their tails and ears down and always gave the impression that they were ready to avoid a kick or a thrown piece of wood Probably because of the cold, chickens shared the shelters of these Indians and their does Despite this fact, their owners had made praiseworthy attempts to remind visitors of their link with civilization. Kerosene hoxes stood on end in the corners, with mats or pieces of white cloth as mantles and in one case a magazine picture of some wild eved señorita was pasted into a rough frame. Usually there was a figure or coloured illustration of the Virgin Mary, and one fortunate habitat actually flaunted a chest of drawers and an iron bed stead This evidence of semi-organized living did not exactly glisten from beneath coats of fresh white paint, but as I have frequently suggested, the Indians have an eye for colour, even though their 'efforts' do achieve a certain drabness in a very short time

Their vision appeared to faithfully observe only the "city" furnishings of their one roomed homes and eschewed all temptation to recognize the carelessness of the unfettered

chickens which did little to introduce hygienic standards to those earthen floors. Here and there, outside the huts, pottery and gourds would be done up in bundles—I never discovered why, but there they were—and an occasional large earthenware water jar, such as might have hidden Ali Baba, lay on its side or arainst a will.

Then there was a lot of chattering and I discovered that my precious mule had arrived. "Precious" because I was later to appreciate how near to hell parts of the trail could be without a mule

Actually there were two of them, one was to carry my duffle, provisions and, in his more weary moments, the mulceter. The other visibly sain into the ground and dropped several inches in height when I climbed aboard. I fit like getting off again but on looking around and seeing no others on any section of my horizon, I hesitated, realizing how long. I had been waiting for these spectmens. The mulcteer seeing my indicasion disclaimed any idea that the animals were being subjected to anything out of the ordinary. So I erased my humanitarian instincts and insensitively encouraged the mule to proceed, and surprisingly enough it did.

From this point it was all a climb Up and up we went following a clearly marked trail into the regions that were becoming more bare and more windswept, until I rumnated as to how much of myself the warmer Oriente would manage to that

Towards midday we passed over one range just below the snow line and as we descended subsequently into a long valley and eventually past a small like it began to rain Rain is rain the world over, sometimes more violent in one place than in another but our trek through it is hardly worth recording except that the mule flicked its ears in disgust and instead of sitting down began to run. It was not a lope, or a trot. "Runnings" is the only way its movement could be described Frequently we came to small bridges across streams. Many times I had to dismount and follow the animals with the muletter just in front of me shouting "Mala, caramba," every yard or to. To pick, one's way over many of those big flakes of fallen rock and also across the boulders themselve demanded

accurate stepping on the part of the mules, but only the stones shpped, and the animals would reach the top of these climbs and wait for us. On many occasions we were confronted with the necessity of zig zagging down muddy hillsides, and here again these live toboggans managed to keep to the 'run' Certainly mules have something which horses lack and I say it having experienced ownership of seventeen horses

The path which we followed was known as the "Popiacit Trail" and in the late afternoon a village of several huts which I was told bore the name of Popiacit came into riew These were the first Orients buildings that I had seen. Of course they could not strictly be given that label because they really only possessed a flavouring of what I would term Orients but their roofs ran from a considerable height above the ground to within a few feet of it. The vegetation round about was very green, and perhaps in comparison to the chilly plains, that I had crossed higher up, the atmosphere seemed warm, but not steaming Green leaves and liana, branches and a great deal of torn vine lay on the trail which was becoming very muddy. Probably there had been a heavier storm there during the afternoon than the one that the muleteer and I had experienced

On three occasions this man had to hack with his makket at a fallen tree across the path, for in so many places the tangle of greenery on either side of us grew to the very edge of this 'foot trail' which must often have not been more than six niches across. Once a mule—the one with the pack—thred to step with its front feet up onto a fallen tree. But the wood was green and wet and the animals is feet slipped over it, giving the unfortunate quadruped a surprising joit in the stomach and leaving it suspended with all four feet off the ground. At times I rode shead of the pack mule and kept up a jog for a mile at a time. I was unconcernedly convinced that the trail which I followed was the right one but frequently I would find myself at a dead end on a niver bank, over which I would lose several 'foot pounds' of energy encouraging the snimal across Then having armived at the other side after an impromptu bathe, I would find myself confronted with plain unadulterated rungle and no trail

So back I would coax the mule again to its very obvious disgust and, returning half a mile along the trail, I would come upon a barely tolerant muletter, whose eyes blazed the word "tenderfoot", and who had always appeared to know where I had turned from the 'beaten route'.

These regular additions to the normal journey did not cure me of travelling on shead I could usually stand half a day "plodding along" on the back of a mule, but after that, for the sake of diversion, and to exercise cramped knees, a faster

motion was always tempting

By nightfall we came to a solitary hut with this new species of high roof. There were one or two Indians inside it with a fire, and a woman was cooking a potato soup. But the way that they dug their hands into it and alternatively scratched their legs as they sprawled on the earthen floor successfully discouraged me. I opened a tim of beans and after dealing with the contents threw away the container and prepared to find a place for my sleeping bag. The members of this small community made a dive for the empty tim and the successful one held it above his head trumphantly. Odd things assume value in the forest country of Ecuador.

As I dislike "fug" or heavy laden atmosphere, I slept outside on a veranda of rough wood. But it was comfortable enough and I drifted off into an easier world almost at once

My mental 'tune piece' woke me just as the night squeezed the last drops out of its allotted period. I found mystel covered with ants which, not content with roaming the area of my carcass, had exercised some mystenous percognitive and eaten chunks of my person at will. The Indians at the hut assured me that the anis rarely visited them in such numbers and that thus was one of their infrequent field days

So I sat in a cold stream, squished all the crawling marauders that I could find, dressed, and cooked myself some rolled

oats.

We were away in a very short time, and the day passed in much the same way as the previous one. The trail presented similar hazards, it rained and towards the afternoon we began to climb again.

At 4 pm. the track widened and assumed an air of im-

portance Riding ahead I saw the first hut for ten hours, and then another and finally a collection of them built around a rectangular field on the slope of a hill. This was Baeza The buildings had lost that Orients appearance and were more civilized in type, though still "huts". There was a small bungalow amongst them which turned out to be the police station. The resident Ecuadorian official greeted me, but subsequently raised a long story about an "explorers' licence" But I could see that he was doubtful about it and on subsequent questioning I learnt that such a "regulation" had been under discussion by the Government for some time, and that this fellow was uncertain as to whether it had been passed. The idea was that each "foreign" venturer to the Oriente should buy a \$100 licence I explained that most of my party were already in the Orients and had been there some months mapping unknown Ecuador for the good of the country But few things happen around Baeza and this representative of law and order probably felt that he should create recognition of his position in this possibly forgotten outpost. He assumed an attitude of governmental dignity and said that as there was some doubt about the matter I must turn back, or wait until he had heard from Quito But finding that I appreciated his position he eventually relaxed and when I showed him a Royal Aero Club certificate with its polite demand for assistance in emergencies all written out nicely in Spanish, he adopted a more lenient demeanour and, after enjoying a tin of my beans and sharing a cigarette, he okayed my passage beyond Bacza

During the evening I heard one man discussing gold with another It seemed that a great deal of it could be recovered from a nearby riser. And that the 'colours' washed were "white lemon" This suggested the presence of silver.

I was awakened at 3 30 a m. next day by a lot of shouting and Indians fighting around my 'sleeping bag' on the dark 'veranda' of a streable hut, which had traded me shelter for a few tentary. One of the Indians trod on my foot in the midst of the sculle, so I got up and cuffed both combatants who were also standing on my clothes. This temporarily quietened these two but not the women, who were arguing and following each

other about the house Frequent slaps on feminine faces echoed throughout this crude building and then a lot of hitting with pieces of wood and the throwing of things began a circus of which I appeared to be the centre Again a few clouts temporarily quietened things and then the native subordinate of the resident policeman came on the scene, threw verbal javelins of Spanish at all participants and peace reigned temporarily It seemed that one Indian had won affections to which he had no official right. And I gathered that not only a husband but yet another rival entered into the question Then there was jealousy on the part of a woman that had been "coldshouldered", and the collective debate, which had followed the hut-owner s discovery of a heart stealing episode, had risen in a flash from whispers to a 'free for-all' The long and short of it was that the possessor of this abode told these erring hangerson to get out, and the native orderly went further and encouraged them to leave Baeza at once These 'destroyers of the peace' were evidently friends of my muleteer, and as they all decided to proceed towards the Oriente, he was anxious to leave with them I had no objections to this and was glad to get away early, so that by 4 am we were on the trail, breakfast having seemed an unnecessary obstacle to progress

Again there were more rivers to cross and about eleven in the moming we began to climb another range. It rained almost at once and, as the trail became natrower and more middy, the downpour seemed to gather in intensity and many times I expected my mule to slip over the edge of the precipious slopes. Of course it didn't, because it was a mule and anyway such a

drop would not easily have been survived

Instead of softening, the rain became a deluge and hailstones hammered in our faces, water poured down my neck and it was like old times again. I wondered if Mont and Carl were

enjoying such a party in the Llanganatis

At the crest of the range there was a natural 'look-out' or observation point, and, gazing as far east as my vision could take me, I could see nothing but a dove tailed tangle of green There were high teres and it was a high tangle. It wasn't a "binght" green but from this point through the rain it appeared

as a dirty dark shade of that colour If Pizarro came this way

the sight must have disheartened him considerably
Adventure magazines, going the limit, converse in such
terms as 'Impenetrable Jungle' 'Confused Green Hell'

"Intertwined Mass" "Unconquerable Forest Land"

But the view of the country ahead suggested all these things and when I thought of Enre's party a couple of hundred miles the other side of my tangled horizon, I understood something of the discouraging trek to come

About a p m we descended into a quiet, noticeably fettile valley which had also been visited by the rain that had swamped us for two hours. Here two large hits, chickens, dogs, and Indians put in appearance. But Indians of a different type Many of them wore only a loin cloth and were 'bronzed-yellow', slight, and agile. Others wore the usual "western" peon's dress. Here I was able to obtain poached eggs on rice, as well as a very welcome potato soup Its manner of preparation did not interest or disturb me, as I was more concerned with counteracting the chill from my recent collar of halstones.

The stay only lasted half an hour and at once we began to enter tropical foliage. Perhaps I have given the impression that much of the vegetation, which we had already passed during the previous days, was tropical. It had all seemed so, in comparison to the shrubbery of the Andes western slopes, but now longer lianas hung occasionally a hundred feet above us and swung gently as we brushed or pulled at their ends lying on the path. Unrelenting roots of big trees beside us, stretching across streams bordered by palms, represented part of our trail. Thin inch thick stems rose to join hanging vinery and storm bent' foliage, whilst the 'path' through it all was another leaf strewn 'cave', rough with more roots and logs.

Through the dusk I eventually saw a crude one-roomed shack built on stakes and walled with thin sticks It stood in the middle of a morass and long before the mule began messily to stumble towards it, I knew that this would be laundry day for

me. Fortunately there was a river which ran nearby In no time I was up to my knees in mud—it was asking too much to persuade the struggling mule to carry me through—and frequently I fell over and put my face in it all I didn't know it, but this was a 'picnic' to what was to come The muleteer's 'outeast' friends numbered the sum total of four and there were approximately another four inhabitants already in this mud marooned abode, which seemed to be little larger than a normal bathroom in size. Without the bath

They told me that I'd reached Jondachi, but whether the name referred to the hut, the district, or to the morass, I never

quite discovered

I sat on a rock beside the river and dried my trousers before a fire That is to say I occasionally turned them on a stake erected near the feeble flames, and, in the intervals, spooned to my palate the contents of another tin of beans

Somehow I found parking space amongst that glut of humanity Had there been any cross questioning as to who had bathed recently I should only have bet on myself Despite the cracks in the walls, the aroma of the interior suggested the stomach of a whale I t was not possible to safely sleep outside, there being no "veranda" of the type that I had managed to find hitherto And many mosquitoes sauntered about I had no intention of tolerating a malanti inp yet, although I knew the Ornets to be riddled with this fever

Mr Juan Clark of the Quito American Mission had taken much trouble to make this trek easy for me Just inside the Orients it appeared, a mission "outpost" had been set up at an Indian village called Tena which, for some ambitious reason,

had been equipped with a radio transmitter

Through this medium Mr. Clark had arranged for a couple of Indians to meet me at Jondachi, where I was to leave the muletteer, the trail being too "bad" for mules from there onwards. This was what I had been told. In the morning I discovered just how bad".

From the word go the day's progress could only have been defined as slogging along with mud to the knees, not always soft, relening mud, but the stiff kind from which a leg put

forward takes with it half the countryside

It meant that to make anything like a commendable journey, I had to become a 'root hopper' I watched the carriers to learn how I might equality It was not often that they put themselves to the trouble of wading through this constant morass. There was always a root every yard or so and with practised balance and much bounding, fair distances could be covered without much "falling in", although such an incident usually crowned a series of more than a dozen of my frogleaps. Roots were always sloping and my boots refused to hold If, by chance, they did allow me to "land", I invanably skidded on "taking off" for another root, much to the amusement of the two "pack" Indians I don't suppose they had ever found much to laugh at, until I appeared on the scene. This introductory experience was apparently enovable to them

Eventually the mud became more washy and I gave up my kangaroo acrobates I could not make out whether I was walking in a urver or just mud, it seemed to be both But there was no clear water to drink and so much expenditure of energy was thirst provoking Yet on the principle that 'it' would 'come' I managed to stave off thoughts of cool bottles of Bass Eventually a "destr-dream" species of "crystal-clear" creek gurgled across the slushy trail I then deaded that I had not

been walking in a river

Shortly after leaving the stream, several almost grotesque copper skinned Indians, dressed in little less than a girdle, with faces painted in blue streaks, appeared not on the path but in the bushes at my side. Probably, or I should say undoubtedly, they had heard me coming and had intended to sheer' out of the way. But the jungle was thick and such a feat was not easy. After seeing them I should not have been surprised if Deerfoot-of the Prairies had slunk onto the scene and emutted awar sourcel.

The surprising thing about these people was that they carried guns I had never before associated the idea of Ornati Indians with anything like this We all had a good long stare at one another and, when I had gone by, the Indian carriers grunted something at them in Outbus They were interesting looking fellows, but were the type that one only expects after a supper of matured cheese or in a Hollywood colour epic

Their faces were inclined to be what is by many generalized as "Mongolian" although to give a more likely portrait I should have said "Burmese"

At three in the aftermoon a rocky hillside brought temponary "finis" to the sloppy trul but the rocks were also muddy and the path narrowed again to only a few inches in width. To reach the bottom of this hill before the climb we had to cross a violent river over a felled tree trunk. This emitted various cracking sounds when I was at the middle of it, but apparently it was merely a protest, and I completed my Blondin act successfully. Once over the hill, the going was more encouraging for the path was wider, but the mud managed to slow all motion.

We reached the banks of what must have been part of the slashing, bubbling river already crossed, I passed beside this for some time and recrossed it I opened a tim of sardines but they were bad, a fact which for some reason I failed to notice tuntl my meal was well under way.

When the evening came the carriers turned off the trail which now led over little hills into partially open country, and I followed them to several huts, one of which had a storey above the ground floor. It was to this that they led me

Now began the bargaining for food and shelter. There was much discussion with a raven haired Indian woman, barefooted and in the usual thick skirts of the "west?" Finally I was given permission to sleep in a room upstairs with the carriers and I found it extraordinarily clean and furnished with basker mats, a bench and table—crudely done, of course, but I had not expected this in the Orente I exhibited some cents and was brought a mug of ratpadina syrup as black as treacle, to which of course it was related. But its taste was more agreeable than any molasses or honey that has ever crossed my palate

Then the 'husband' returned home and there was much argument. He came up to inspect me—a wild looking species but dessed in trousers—and when I had shown and promised him some money, he went off. After my arrival at the hut, the Indian cartiers disappeared I expect that they were getting something to cat. They came in when I was about to sleep and

lay in the opposite corner

## 232 I LEFT ENGLAND

One thing that I had noticed so far about the Indians on the castern slopes, was that though inoffensive, most of them were rugged individualists and if they didn't like a thing, they made their ideas apparent. Money appeared to be of secondary importance and if their intentions failed to coincide with your plans, it failed to disturb them. I wondered how long a Poona Sahib could deal with such people before sinking beneath the clutching hand of a stroke.

## CHAPTER XXIII

AT two o'clock in the afternoon energy is not always at its highest pitch. It was the following day and my entourage of two picked a careful way through the forest whilst I did what I could to preserve grage presuge by attempting to keep the pace

Our course for an hour had followed a gentle decline, through mushly ground, knee high with small plants, head high with the larger kind, whilst trees grew to all altitudes and sizes from thicknesses of an inch 'Yes, our course followed this slope, but the carriers, probably with a reason, eschewed the fact that the shortest distance between two points is a straight line. And so our route snaked backwards and forwards amongst all these 'feet long' green and brown leaves.

It was along this section of my journey to the Rio Napo that I experienced the first jurgle that really approached the type which blood-and thunder magazines manage so colourfully to pen for us

Steam was actually pouring skywards from all quarters of the virgin forest about me. Thick wisps of it rose in that sem translicent way, a warming reminder of efficient bathrooms back across the mountains. For the trans Andean trek had been a chilly one. Involuntary bathes from muleback had been unwelcome "tefreshers" in air which had chosen to mp rather than to dry. The atmosphere had not been entirely conductive to my conscientious morning washing, which had been nothing more than cold cat licks. These had had little effect on the remaining four or five layers of caked Ecuador and additional blemishes collected on the journey. I usually prefer cold water to hot, but each day I had grown more savage with the irritations set up by the lack of a good hearty scrubbing brash and a basin of boling water.

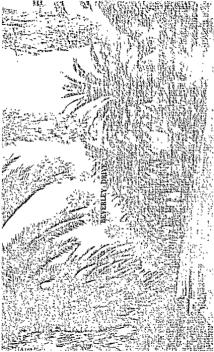
And to-day it hadn't rained, throughout the morning the temperature of the air had risen pleasantly and here was jungle really steaming, permeating my constitution with a warmth which had come to stay.

As if to add all the colour of which magazines are capable, every possible type of butterfly which my imagination (and it usually neglects study in this direction) could have conjured, fluttered through this 'stream' and massed exotic-looking troops in my path. We passed a hut built on stakes, which must have always avoided molestation whilst that large monkey capered on the roof. As I watched, it retreated, then came to peer again, thrusting its head forward and screwing up its eyebrows as if suffering some perplexity. All the undergrowth and trees were a very fresh shade of green, except for—as I have inmated—various brown leaves. The copper-coloured mud contrasted vigorously with the surrounding foliage. I wished that I had included a colour film in my camera equipment. It was certainly a scene that should have been shared.

At four o'clock we reached what was comparatively open country and the beginning of a very definite and well constructed path Only a little way ahead there were fields obviously under cultivation, and everything as usual was again green. I rounded the next bend before the carriers, and was amazed, then extraordinarily pleased, to see a horse and Indian standing beside the track. It was my intention to buy, hire or annexe that animal, if I had to go the limit of my dollar bills and I O U's. But I was pleasantly thunderstruck to find that the horse and its guardian had been there all day awaiting my pleasure. This was a further example of Clark's organization by radio.

Trekking anywhere is more often than not an exhilarating pastime, but when many pounds of thick solid mud accompanies each leg through even more menacing morasses, so that in the end you appear to be wearing those waders which you didn't bring, the exhilaration stage passes to an anticlimax. So that it was pleasant to scrape away what I could of this suggestion of elephantiasis and heave myself once again into a saddle

From this point onwards, I took a special interest in what I





could see of the developed Oriente Huts were again in sight on these cultivated patches, but in the distance there appeared to be a regular village.

Yes, said the 'horse Indian', who could speak Spanish as well as Quuchas, we were coming to Archidona. By the truil were occasional raised platforms like crude bandstands open except for thatched roofs. In one of these an Indian, with bobbed hair, a painted face, and dressed to the waist only in a form of sarong or skirt, swayed and flung himself about obviously drunk. He ranted and screamed, issuing frequent bursts of Quadwa, and often huring himself to the ground. It was a sight which aroused not amusement but pity. A woman stood nearby waiting to catch him every time he dashed himself at the floor—

I passed more Indians Nearly all of them had blue streaks on their faces and were drunk. The Tena Indian walking alongside of the horse said that this was a "holiday" and that everyone had been buying chizks. Very soon I was between the huts, which stood in an orderly fashion on either side of what amounted to a road. I entered an immense open space, in every way resembling a football field, which must have been the town "square". All the more imposing constructions of the town hondred this earther offers.

the town bordered this earthen place
Everyone certainly had been buying chicks, there were few
sober faces, but a great deal of geniality It was good to watch
these poor people getting some fun out of life Out in that
wilderness, there could not be much else to which they could
look forward Yet from what I have now seen of Ornate
villages, I should imagine that Archidona is the largest of
them all

My three disciples led the way across this large allotment, and nobody took any notice of us. Very shortly we had left the village behind and were encountering mud again—black mud—but "nothing" in comparison to the previous type. Fruit trees (orange and lemon) grew in a half wild state well away from the village. I picked up a fallen orange and sucked noisily at its sweetness, with a leg sling round the pommel of the saddle. This was certainly "relaxation plus".

The horse, given its head, led the party along the now less

perceptible trail up slippery banks and across creeks, through a muddy bog—cousin to those that I now knew so well—and finally beside a wide river which we followed for a mile and then swam. The evening was drawing to a close, but I was not cold, only damp. The trail went on again between less congested foliage than I had found on the slopes of the mountain several hours before. The disadvantage of the way now was that the horse was finding it slippery.

Then suddenly in the dusk we reached Tena, a village with about ten large buildings. They were more like shacks than huts, and all were thatched in the usual Oriente manner. I was shown the one which had been partly responsible for the case of my trip, with its aerial stretched triumphantly above the village. Here was an Oriente link with the rest of Ecuador.

But, not stopping, I rode on across this smaller town "playacum-allotment" and being directed down to the banks of a large rure, which must have been the same one that I had swum earlier in the afternoon, I crossed with water swirling well around the shoulders of the horse. Our course then lay up and down slippery hills until finally, at the side of the trail, a notice, dimly readable in the half light, proclaimed in Spanish that here was the estate of the Tena Mission.

Down a road of black soil the horse swung briskly with ears stretched frequently forward. The way was again bordered by fruit trees and palms, until we reached steeper slopes and a soft slushy track which brought us on to a cleared hillside

above a racing river

The Indians indicated that I was to leave the horse. The fellow who had brought the animal to the outskirts of Archicolan unsaddled it, and the two carners led the way to the water's edge. A dug-out cance was waiting, and once the critical had been launched out from the bank with its complement of three, the Indians paddled violently with the bow pointing slightly upstream. In this manner we crossed the fast flowing river and reached the other side several hundred yards below the point opposite which we had embarked.

A quarter of a mile back from the water's edge stood a twofloored bungalow, with one or two disconnected outhouses There was a pleasant garden and when I walked up the stone bordered path, a figure in white greeted me. He was the Indian missionary who had arranged for my horse and carriers

An organized swim in the nver by lamp light, a change of clothing, and a hot meal at the well kept table shared by the missionary's wife, and his assistant, brought forward a different aspect to the events of the day. And I was told that I was only a few hour from the Napo nver.

The assistant added yet another surprise by telling me that he was Rumanian. He spoke French but then my own was negligible so that our conversation continued in Spanish, of which I now had a serviceable vocabular.

After an early start my host and I reached the Napo on horseback by eleven o'clock in the morning. Fate had been unnecessarily obstructive, the Indian missionary observed Usually it took half that time to reach this Amazon tributary But since first his mount and then my own had to be dug from the trail, extra hours had shipped easily by

Yes, I man "dug from the trail". The leading horse had lain with his tail out of sight and only his left foreleg showing above the yellow moras. We had levered stakes underneath him and had hoped that the points were slipping below his hide and not through it.

Probably It had been a prod from one of these butchered saplings which had encouraged the horse to summon all energy to that bust of mud shower floundering, which had left hum sprawled and gasping on firmer ground—like a fish on a river bank.

Finally he had recovered, munched at stray pieces of grass, and had ultimately been resaddled

The animal under me, not as fierily vinle as I should have liked to depict him, had also lacked what must constitute horse sense "Mule-sense" would have been a better word.

Having seen its friend nearly disappear into the bowels of the earth, I should have expected it to well survey every other square yard of the trul, especially as I had given it an entirely free head. But no. Very soon I had joined the ranks of the wallowers and had lain with one leg under the horse, half encased in another tenactously hospitable by However, we had finally reached Napo, still 'on horseback', although the trail had been as had as, if not worse than, that encountered between the morass known 2s Jondachi and the village "limits" of Archidona

From above the morning's trail, the sun had projected a burrowing ray until it had seemed that there could be little moisture left in our constitutions, which had not joined the waves of steam skyward bound. As is usual, my bugbear—thirst—was terrific. Tormenting visions of massive ice boxes, with frosted bottles, had projected disturbingly into my mental studio.

I had watched the trail for fruit trees, recollecting the oranges and lemons on the route from Archidona But none had appeared

Finally after a diversion during which the Indian carners following behind had caught a black rabbit in a bush and wrung its neck, I had spotted a tree laden with a mysterious yellow fruit, suggesting a species of nectarine

It had been an attractive sight for a swollen tongue and I had picked one ready to wolf the whole thing at a gulp My companion, then travelling behind my horse, had shouted a protest in unintelligible Spanish and, spurring his animal forward, had knocked the fruit from my hand

"Poison," he had muttered after drawing breath to recover

himself, "Poison"

This incident probably saved me from further unsatusfactory experiments with arboreal provender, and possibly the

frustration of my plans to again see Piccadilly

The village of Napo at the head of this river consists, like Tena, of about ten Indian "houses" Unlike those in Tena, however, not all the huts in Napo were "thatched" They spread in some cases along the water's edge or else well away from it

Perhaps this represented the usual Ecuadonan idea of preserving a town square or place, for most of the houses were built around another rough rectangle, again resembling a football field, though it would not have made a very sausfactory one

Our first act was to locate an Indian who would not only sell, or hire a canoe, but be prepared to accompany me down river for several hundred miles.

My host led the way to one of the larger houses where we were plied with oranges picked one by one from the surround-

ing trees, as they were required

"Yes." volunteered the head of the household, as he swung lazily among the veranda shadows in his hammock, "perhaps you can obtain a canoe . . . and Indians . . . . "

"Fine, I intend to get away in a couple of hours,"

The Indian smiled benevolently, looked sharply at me to see if it was a toke, then he shook his head

"You cannot do that, Señor," "But I can here a canoe...?"

"I think so."

"And Indians...?"

"Yes."

"Then where is the delay?"

The old man looked towards the missionary shrugging his shoulders good humouredly. "The Senor does not understand," he smuled.

My companion looked embarrassed and explained as best he could "You see that is not the way of these people. . . ."

"What?"

The householder in the hammock took his com-cob again from his mouth, and a thread of saliva bridged the gap between the two.

"Perhaps, Señor, in a few days time . . ." he began

I experienced one of my infrequent rushes of blood, and summed up my view of the situation in what Spanish vernacular I could command. That good fellow, the missionary, seemed disturbed.

"We shall go and see what is possible," he offered. "You can never tell. . . . "

The old man stared amusedly as we left the house and told us to come back later, which we eventually did, to enjoy more fruit.

There were at least a dozen canoes tied to various sections

of the river bank Two had been pulled up on land, one was being repaired, and a large digout, obviously built up in sections and quite like a Roman galley, tugged tightly at a stake as the twenty mile an hour current swept beneath it We approached the Indian earpenter who was dealing with his docked craft

"Canoes? No, I haven't any Perhaps Señor Maldonado."
So we walked to the house of "Señor Maldonado", quite a
distance down the river bank His 'housekeeper' welcomed
us for she knew my missionary firend No, Señor Maldonado was not at home, she did not know when he would be
back He had gone down the river, she had not been told
where, and there were no canoes for hire

I pointed to the four or five dug-outs tied to the bank below the house. The woman shrugged her shoulders, and

repeated that they had no canoes

The 'house" was of course an enlarged shack, with a long veranda looking south and facing the river. I was thinderstruck to find, in the bare room where we conversed, the remains of a piano. How in the world had such a thing reached this outlandish spot? Surely not over the trails that I had traversed. The "lady-of the house", having noted my barely disguised indignation over the fact that no cance was to be had from this quarter, was not disposed to discuss pianos. But when we left it was a question which occupied my mind more than that of the cance. Yet I never discovered how this unweldy musical instrument had put in appearance at Napo.

"Have you a canoe? Then do you know where one can be

obtained? What about those that I see over there?"

But the answers were always negative until one Indian mentioned "Señor Riviera" The prefix of Senor amongst Indians usually denoted leading men of the village, and apart from Maldonado, Riviera was the only other inhabitant to whom I actually heard it accorded

He received us well, and after a lengthy discussion during which he attempted to evade the subject upon which he must have received word that we would come, canoes were finally mentioned

Riviera, a man of liberal bulk, looked capable of striking a

good bargain, and undoubtedly was about the biggest "fish" in this forgotten "pool"

The two front flaps of his serviceable trousers were encouraged to their rendezvous by a broad belt around his disciplined paunch. He wore a grey flannel singlet, whilst a slouch cap shaded his rotund smile of suspicion

Yes, he thought that he might do something for me When?

Oh, Thursday-or Friday-

It was then Monday By now the trick of suppressing my more violent thought until ten had been slowly counted was no unfamiliar occupation I pleaded, I protested, I scoffed a Rivicera's dilatory business methods At length I swallowed the hook I would pay anything, I told him, but I must have a canoe, a couple of Indians, and get away at once

He made a dramatic show of appearing to weigh the situation. Then he sent for two Indians, told them to their obvious disgust that I was to be paddled down the Napo, and hounded

them off at once to prepare an appropriate craft.

At this unexpected termination to Riviera's apparently procristinatory attitude, I relaxed annazed Riviera turned to me He had heard shout the ways of grages, he said, and their aversion to the mailians (to-morrow) spirit of his people. He respected the "American" manner of doing things, and would arrange for my getaway to be prompt.

To me the terms for the Induns and canoe have were surprisingly moderate, though perhaps my appraisal of the busness fadled to connoide with Runera's private shrewdness. For when maming the figure, I noticed that his sharp eyes were searching my face But it was all a very amouble arrangement and I have no idea what my length of stay would have been at Napo, if it had not been for this commercial guant of the

village. Perhaps-

But there is little use in concerning myself with what might have happened for I was successful in getting away within the hour. Yet others have trekked to Napo with the intension of getting somewhere

"Where?"

<sup>&#</sup>x27;Oh, to begin organized gold mining somewhere in THERE,"

said the German Swede, whom I had found unkempt on a crude bed in a hut, as he waved his hand in a circle which encompassed the eastern jungles

"But this mañana of theirs," he continued, "it stops everything You can't hurry them If they want to stop, they stop,

and that is that You still have to live."

He had been existing "on the country" for many months now, and this, in the Oriente, demanded an iron constitution. He looked very ill.

And incidentally, to digress for the moment from my Napo visit to the present, Eric-when I last heard from him at the beginning of this year (1939)-mentioned in his letter that he was suffering the ravages of sprue and fever in a New York nursing home, the sprue having resulted from living long periods on semi-edible roots of the Oriente such as yuca and others, which at the time he had regarded as novel dishes

I first tasted yuca at the Tena mission when it was served fried for the evening meal It would have surprised me had I known that it was to become more of a "standby" than Grapenuts, and that there would be no limit to the ways in which I should see it prepared for mastication. It is a species of vam, related to manioc and cassava root. Yuca found in the Oriente has a cyanide of potassium coating, which permeates into the first few layers of the plant so that the root has to be

scraped and frequently boiled before it is eaten

My new acquaintance at Napo had fever which, he remarked resignedly, had "eaten through to his marrow". He conversed with me in Spanish and said that having spent all that he ever had in this insect ridden part of the world, he only now managed to eke out a living by washing gold colours upstream in the Napo I told him of another Swede whom I had met, bearded, blond, and penniless in Quito I men-tioned how this tall giant, dressed in a much-worn navy blue suit and tattered white sandshoes, had made a polite ritual of daily approaching me on the subject of his impecunious situation, and I described how this Quito Swede had obviously taken with a grain of salt my very genuine regrets that I, too, had been unable to jingle centaves in my pocket

The fellow's story was that he had been in the Galapagos

Islands off the South American coast, trying to wrest a sort of Robinson Crusoe living from the unrelenting conditions there Later when I reached New York I read of a peculiar settlement that had been made many months before on one of those islands by an odd group of people. I forget the exact details but the long and short of it was that some had died of fever, others couldn't stand it and left, until finally the community on this particular island had been reduced to a tinity of which a woman, whom I believe was marined to neither, had formed the apex of the triangle. With the inevitable result.

The article had given names and had spoken of unleashed homicidal moods on the Island. As far as I could remember one name coincided with that of the man from the Galapagos whom I had met in Quito

But my German Swede friend of Napo had never heard of him Dismissing the subject I asked him what quality of gold he had washed from the river. He showed me a quill of it, not exactly "white lemon" which was the colour I had heard existed near Bazea, but rather a very bright yellow.

Having been in an old Quito cathedral where masses of gold plate and ornaments had flashed and reflected the light of candles to create one of the most dazzing displays that I have ever seen, I asked him where it had all been obtained. The stupidity of this question I saw almost at once. That gold, he informed me, had been taken from the Incas. Beaten into shapes demanded by the firars of the Conquistidores, it had been in the possession of the churches ever since

To leap once again ahead of my story for the sake of the immediate subject, I must bring you temporarily back to London where, months later, on a newsreel, I saw "shots" of a very splendid gold crown, set with emeralds, which, valued at over a million dollars, was announced as being on show in America This crown, said the news-commentator, had been lying in an Leuadorian church since the Conquest, another link to the story of the treasure of the Incas

## CHAPTER XXIV

CHARGING like a torpedo down the Napo with those slashing waters pitching the canoe like a cockle shell, I caperienced speed boat pleasure. In a flash it seemed that the village of Napo, my missionary friend, Riviera and, for the moment, a lot of disconcerting mud wallowing, were all far behind me.

As we swung round a bend in that bubbling river, I asked one of the Indians who could speak Spanish, what house that was high above the bank ahead

"That is the house of a gringo"

When asked what grange, his hearing became conveniently impaired I gave him a poke to encourage an answer. But he only shrugged So I was cursed with "grant" Indians. Yet I didn't carry the argument further. I have had my fill of trying to bring people out of themselves, a wearjing and usually profitless task, and so I left the two of them to do what they willed, as long as we moved downstream.

In an unnecessarily short space of time it rained It is not my intention to fill this book with descriptions of rain and more rain. But it certainly came down strongly and flooded our "pride of the waves." The drenching reached its fiercest just before we approached our first set of rapids and as we shot between the rocks at an angle which was very much downhill, the speed of the canoe increased, water splashed over the long gunwales in the manner to which it had been inevitably tempted and I felt that we had passed through some sort of initiation.

The rapids came and went There seemed to be a number of them, and then about five in the evening we reached a long straight patch of ziver, which was pethaps a quazter of a mile across. As soon as the rain ceased, the Indians drew into one of the wild looking banks of soft glutinous soil, and cut a

tovering for the canoe from the entanglement of trees, leaves, and vinery

Taking thin saplings and splitting them, they erected a ernes of half hoops about the level of my head which, lashed ogether with liana, formed the frame-work of a curved roof in and out of this frame work they threaded palm leaves and when the time came for me to slide back to my seat in the cance, it was necessary to bend and recline at an angle. Sull it appeared fauly rain proof and I found myself looking forward to the next downpour in ordet to "try it out".

Darkness came on very quickly I stopped the canoe at the first serviceable sandbank, arranged for it to be drawn well out of the water, then I made a fire.

The Indians rushed off into the scrub waving machetes, and finally returned with more saplings and palm leaves

What now?

They lashed the stakes together so that the frame constructed resembled a raft. Then threading the palm leaves into it, they completed what was obviously to be a shelter

But instead of driving four stales into the sand for each corner of this leafy cover, they cut out two and drove them in so that they stood with forked ends, three feet in height

Two corners of the "shelter" were then fitted into the forks, the other two corners resting on the sand

Having dashed off mine expertly, they now proceeded to build a shelter for themselves, again with the sloping ' back' to the wind, whilst I secured some smaller stakes and propped a mosquito net over the space where I had unrolled my sleepingbag beneath the leafy frame

I possessed one cooking pot, and in this I heated a tin of beans whilst the Indians chewed yuca root which they boiled in a can of their own.

It was an odd feeling waking on that wet sandbank at five o'clock next morning After stuffing back my sleeping outfit into the duffle, I cooked some "rolled oats" over the fire for which the peous had acquired fresh wood

By a quarter to six we were on the river again. It was an "experience" to see the sun rising up over that wide water horizon whilst the busy ripples beside me dashed onwards as if 246

keen to share this more intimate family communion with the solferino ravs

But as the sun mounted higher, the speed of the river slackened, and the Indians were induced to paddle, although not very frequently Passing over more rapids, we swept forward around bends occasionally broadside on, but the balance of the small craft was very good. At another right-angle twist where the banks rose fifty feet on our left and the water's edge was rocky, the river looked deep and we hugged its borders to avoid a whirlpool, which had appeared suddenly beside a peaceful setting of palm trees

The banks now rose vertically, the water became placed with only occasional ripples indicating that it was moving. The sun had enlarged its angle and become hot with piercing intensity, but as we slid between these high sides and under the overhanging trees, a peaceful coolness soothed the senses and progress was pleasant

Then when these rocky walls had diminished to their normal height, which was a matter of a few feet above the river it began to widen, and rather than be insignificant-and hot-in the middle of a vast sheet of water, I chose a course beside the northerly bank where thick foliage and trees of about a hundred feet in height hung over at an angle sufficient to extend the pleasure of a shady trip

I had of course the palm leaf canopy to keep out the glare, but it meant a cricked neck and after I had tried it for a few miles, I preferred to sit out in the similarly confined, though open space of the canoe An occasional monkey rushed the length of an extended branch and grimaced with a worned expression Several otters darted from the sticky riversides into the water Long tailed parrots of practically every hue and rich in blues, greens and reds, massed into the high branches and then, as if at some sign, took off again screeching

It seemed that I was entering quite a sizeable lake, so wide had the river become Also it appeared to be hardly moving at all so that the peons had to paddle a great deal. But as I have already intimated, their attempts were flavoured with halfheartedness, for which I did not blame them in the least They had been hustled away from home on a many week trip

which meant much exertion and work under the padrons system Riviera was of course their padrons. They expected no payment and it must have seemed to them an unnecessary, literally thankless job Why did any silly grange want to be paddled down an infrequently used river where there was little food and many insects. They didn't know and could only wear glum expressions of martyrdom.

So I offered them the equivalent to half a crown each if they paddled as continuously as they were able every day. If I appeared as Crossus to them after this, they gave no sign of it

The insects of the Oriente I had somehow failed to take into consideration when planning the trip, for I had not suspected the presence of so many aggressive varieties

For the first two days, I travelled in shorts and sandshoes only-most tempting to mosquitoes-whilst a topee lent something to this minimum attire which seemed to impress the Indians more than I did

Very soon I found my ankles swelling to the size of the calves of my legs and the 'Borgia' responsible turned out to be a minute form of fly which injected an irritant. It took more strength of mind than I possessed to avoid trying to massage away the stings. And with each rub from the fingers, the poison spread further

Then there were larger flies, wasps, and other heavy bombers, which struck at our faces probably unintentionally So many of these species inhabited the better patches of river bank that we didn't stop to eat, but had a scratch meal in the canoe, the Indians chewing yuca whilst I munched bunanas which they had brought along

That evening a deserted nauve but on the edge of this large 'lake-like' section of the Napo shellered us. The floor was of thin strips of palm about three feet above the ground.

A parch of clear sand on the opposi e southerly bank of the tiver had appeared most inviting, but when I suggested this as a camping a ic, the more uncommunicative of the factors came to use with Spanish which I did not know he possessed.
"No, as, as . " He shook his head trobuily "Las

lefeat, les eskes-

"Las Askas?" Then I remembered siskes means "wal

men", another name for the mysterious Ssabelas which Eric had come to seek

That next morning I found 'pin pricks' in my toes and felt weak Due to the heat I had slept on the 'clothes' instead of beneath them 'The Indians indicated that I had been visited by a bat.

Three days down the Napo I approached what appeared to be a De Mille war canoe being poled upstream It had a large palm leaf canopy and was manned by half a dozen Indians

I strained my eyes to discern what I could of the strange figure which stood erect with arms folded and one foot on the gunwale of this gargantuan craft. It was just where an island separated the Napo into two rivers which swept independently into the jungle, curving perceptibly round again to doublessly meet further down. My cockle-shell tossing about in the splashes of some very gentle rapids, had been preparing to take the northerly course around the water locked piece of land ahead. The sturdy looking monster heading upstream had chosen the southern strip of river.

My Indians had long ceased paddling, with the exception of an occasional subconscious dip to half straighten the canoe, as

they gazed at the approaching craft

The crew became planner There were four Indians behind the canopy concerned with the poling of this leviathan and two with poles in the bows But this other figure? A light gleam suggesting white duck trousers and—yes—a blue sigh (of two it a bandans) binding their union with a bright red shirt.

The big dug-out was now only a few hundred yards away, and as Indians began to surreptuously edge the cance towards the southerly watercourse up which this odd river party moved laboriously against the stream, details became more distinguishable and I saw this violently hued figure in all its glory

A luxuriant dark growth disappearing behind his head hid most of the broad features of this adventurous Cambean type, who was regarding me as intently as I was inspecting him. A red bandana covered most of the wide forehead, whilst a shaggy mane interlocked with the other growth behind his ears. That leg, planted forward with such gusto on the vessel's side, was booted to the knee, whilst a small monkey on the shoulder of this figure, stretched its claw frequently towards his corn-cob pupe, attempting all the time not to over balance.

I studied the features of this colourful individual more closely Captain Kidd? No, better still, Pizarro's ghost still haunting the Orients where most of his entourage of thousands had been lost But I was too slow

'Hub-Alasdair-well, I'll be-"

The voice at least was identifiable. No, not Enc., but that old stake in the-grass Sonny ("Sunny" would have been a more appropriate label). Complete with Cheshire Cat expression he was enjoying a temporary respite between tough bouts of fever which had not yet managed to kill his spirits. We ran both canoes ashore and whilst he tore at his share of

We ran both canoes ashore and whilst he tore at his share of the accumulated mail which I had brought to cheer the party, he told me that he was on his way back to Quito for malaria treatment. He had seen quite sufficient of the Orrant, but he gave me good news Enre was on the Napo river He had left him only eight days ago excavating on the southern bank and truculently fishing up ancient pottery

Sonny mentioned that the expedition had done a lot of good work mapping, so far, well over three hundred miles of river

"It seemed we took star sights all night and plotted by compass all day," he said. He told me tales of the famine-strickin country through which they had passed along the Curary, and coloured it with accounts, which Enc later confirmed, of gigantic spiders, "Man Fraday" footprints in the sand, and boaconstrictors. He added further inspiring information dealing with the hardships of the top and went on to say that fever had been trying to get at them all, that the medicine chest had suffered a beavy run on quanne.

Sonny's appearance with his uncurbed hirsute misk, and unbarbered shaggy head-crop, suggested extremes. Standing in the bows of the large dug-out with his till boots, pet more key and bandana round his head, he had only needed a mabata and a parrot-cage to represent all that was blood-thirsty.

Yet the Sonny creating his evening confure with a river-

dipped comb (which restored dignity from chaos as it ran around his face and then through the bun at the nape of his neck) resembled everything that was peaceful and religious I think that he realized that he had something, for he wore it back to New York where, incidentally, it failed to lead the confidence expected, and merely brought restless nights to his family and 'goose flesh' to his feminine companions

Now that I knew Eric to be on the Napo, I decided to travel part of the way upriver with Sonny His crew were Jibaro Indians, straight haired muscular fellows who, in their own language, called themselves Jhuara

language, called themselves Shuara
They came of a tribe who inhabited the virgin forests around
the Riss Pastaza, Morona, Upano Santiago and their tributary
streams
These regions are politically-divided between the

Republics of Ecuador and Peru It is confirmed that the Jibaros still form one of the most numerous and important Indian tribes of South America Despite the fact that some Jibaros live in "impenetrated" country their 'hazarded' total is said to be around fifteen

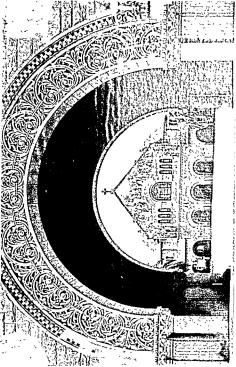
thousand at least
They are divided into smaller tribes which do not always
preserve genularly towards each other They are said to be
without uniform tribal organization, and do not recognize any

ordinary political authority
This division also stamps their social institutions and customs, which differ amongst tribes. They have invariably been able to show a united front against any white interference and in 1599 they are alleged to have carried out an incipient rebellion against. Spanish oppression on the Upano, Pauto, Santiago and Morona rivers. Most of the white population in the flourishing villages of Sevilla do Oro, Logrono, and Monda carried. After this the whites, with very few exceptions, managed to leave the Jibaros to themselves. Enc. had lived amongst Jibaros on a former expedition. This, I learnt, had enabled him to encourage the chief of the Jibaro.

tribe living around the Puyo district to hire him some men Puyo, an Orinne village approached from the west through the pass near Baffos, has civilized contacts. It has a canteen and, more surprisingly, a telegraph station. Any form of civilization



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sooner or later brings to bear the old fact that money is an asset. And the libaro chief, who was now accompanying Sonny back again, had been prepared to offer his services, at a price

But, as I have intimated, the libaros do not care for white domination and, according to Sonny, the old chief, whose name was Severa Vargas, had in every way shown his dislike of the new, wild, foodless districts in the far east of Ecuador He had complained of the insects No insects like these had ever plagued Puyo He spoke and dreamed of this 'twelve or thirteen but' hometown. Severa was an old man, yet his tribal life had been dramatically adventurous and he recounted some blood-curdling details

Not many years before, he had stormed this village of which he spoke so highly, and had taken it. According to him self, his prestige as a chieftain among the Jibaros of that dis-

unct still increased yearly rather than otherwise. He showed me a deep furrow edgeways across his tongue,

and an old wound in the back of his neck-the course of a bullet. Someone, he told me, had tried to kill him in his This, he added, had greatly reduced his strength, which had

been 'twice that of most men" He certainly had fine muscles and a husky torso, but he said that he tired easily

I asked him if he knew who had shot him and a gleam came into both eyes Yes-he nodded his head slowly and malevolently-he did know the man. He was not living in the Oriente now, but-

If that man could have seen what the expression of old Severa plainly said, he would appreciate the advantages of continued existence in western Equador

This libaro chief told me that his race were the most warlike of all Indian tribes in the country, and their blood feuds and battles of extermination between parties were continuous and nourished by witchcraft. He agreed that these wars did no one any good, but that things were a little quieter now Still, he added, men have to fight, they must How otherwise can they achieve true fame Jibaro warriors carried spears and shields, but preferred guns

Not unnaturally I asked him about head shrinking which is the speciality of his tribe. He indicated that these trantiat or head trophies which are taken from slain enemies were not merely tokens of victory, but are considered to become charged with supernatural powers, and form a basis of Jibaro religion.

Yes, I conveyed to him, but what about these killings to obtain heads and shrink them quickly for sale I had been offered several in Quito with perfect features and luxuriant hair (in one case the head of a grey haired woman)

Severa shook his head That, he said with a bland expression, was a bad business and they were trying to stamp it out But what could you do, were there not wrong-doers in every com-

munity

A wise old man, this Puyo chief, shrewd and cunning I wondered if he had actually offered his own ideas regarding the traffic in shrunken heads, and whether, as far as he was concerned, such trade actually went on unsanctioned

If his tribe was so war like, I asked him, what were these tales that I had heard, whispered in Napo, of the fierce Ssabelas, let aukor

Oh yes, he had heard of las aukas (only in one case did I ever hear them called Sasbelas), they were very strong and very savage and kept away from other tribes except for very occasional early morning raids

And then people were butchered

This is all the gist of what Severa told me. He spoke hesitant Spanish, I spoke it badly, and gesticulation entered into a great part of our coorversation. He continued his information to add that whereas the aukas were wild men only, the Jibaros were "quietly" brave and powerful Where the Jibaros were (a crude skirt to the waist) Ssabelas wore nothing at all, except a twine girdle to bind the loose parts of their body when carrying out a raid.

Regarding the man trap with which the Ssabelas were said to guard their retreats I gathered that one method was to dig a hole in the ground four or five feet in depth and large enough for a full grown man to fall into At the bottom of the hole three pointed sticks are arranged in an erect position These pointed sticks were called ath, and they rise about five or six inches above the bottom of the hole. At the surface, the opening of the hole is covered with sticks and leaves, which disguises it from the skulking enemy, until he falls into it. Then, of course, his feet are staked on the pointed sticks, and he must await the pleasure of his captors

A different type of trap is also erected on the tral along which the enemy is expected. It consists of a big branch or a small tree which is bent down close to the path with one end fixed in the ground. On the upper end, eight pointed sticks are lashed in such a way as to form 'teeth of a comb' about a foot in length. Then this stake with its "comb" is pulled back from the trail into a bow and is fixed against two special poles. Attached to these are strips of lians which are run across the forest path in such a way that the contact or entanglement of a man's foot wall render him liable to a thump in face or chest from these sharp stakes. As most "attacks" were said to take place in the dark hours of the morning such traps were not always evident to the wary manuders.

After this description, I appreciated the fact that I had been born a Briton and not "of the Oriente"

Once again I returned to the subject of shrunken heads and war feuds. It appeared that to the more religious Jibaros, the death of a great chief is enjoiered by some Indian who has wished a curse on him. The tinbe's witch-doctor carries out a scance, in which he decides that he has discovered the name of the supposed assassin. The sons of the dead chief are told and a 'blood satisfaction' policy is prepared. It is often enough to kill the brother, or uncle of the assassin. Frequently these feuds are handed down through generations. Witch-doctors are constantly consulted throughout their duration and dreams are carefully noted for a bearing on the blood thirsty matter in hand.

Once "satisfaction" has been achieved and the victim is lying stiff and cold, the head is "collected."

The method of shrinking ran apparently as follows A knife-cut is made at the back and the skin of the face is gradually drawn from the skinl, the adhering parts being cut gently from all bone which is then thrown away. The scalp is then

placed in boiling water and left for a while, after which it is hung up on a stake to cool

Then the part which was slit with a knife, to remove the skull, is sewn up. Three stones are then taken and heated One at a time they are dropped into the "head" through the hole of the neck and are rolled round inside, burning and searing the skin, which has already been partly shrunk by the hot water. These same actions are then repeated with hot sand. Throughout the ceremony the spirit of the dead man is always supposed to be haunting the head. Everything is done to keep it at bay.

Whilst hot sand is being poured inside, the head is swivelled so that the sand acts on all parts, the chief object being to burn away any remaining flesh. The trophy is reduced in size by the repetition of this procedure and, as it shrinks, the face is carefully moulded by the fingers of the shrinkers, so that every feature is retained. Three small sticks are placed through the lips of the shrunken head, scaling them from ever issuing home truths about the slayer. Around these wooden pins, twine is threaded, and the whole tranta, now the size of an orange, is usually dyed with charcoal

In Quito, I had examined the heads, which I had been shown, carefully The hair was always glossy and usually black I had been told that these commercial specimens had been reduced too quickly and that they ome pseudo inasmuch as proper trantias take months to shrink The Jibaros say that this is not so, that, instead, it is a matter of weeks only But the ceremonies (first, second and third feasts), continue over a long period

I asked Severa if he had any shrunken heads back in Puyo He pursed his lips and again that gleam came into his eyes

But instead of answering, he merely smiled

## CHAPTER XXV

A DAY after meeting Sonny, and the Jibaros at his disposal, I left him, advising against his intended trip back to Quito via Jondachi. But I was afterwards convinced that this trail was a motor road compared to the way from Napo to Puyo and back through the more southerly Bafos pass.

On my sixth day down river the two normally silent men in the cance broke into animation and, pointing to the right bank, appeared to have teached some excitable conclusion.

As had always been necessary, I had to dig one of them between the shoulder blades before I could squeeze out an explanation of these antics

Having been prodded, the gentleman in front of me condescended to share his discovery but, at the last moment, I reprieved his breath, for I had finally 'got there'.

In the interwoven mass of dry looking jungle, a cleaning had been made and there was a familiar 'tent fly', a familiar Hector, and a real live Eric.

At least I guessed it wasn't Tolstoi, for that penetrating gaze, and those features, could not have been disguised by any facial scrub

When I saw him he was sitting writing at a camp table, in front of which three Indians were shovelling away the softsoil half-heartedly.

Nearby squatted Hector the Panamanian boy with an air of authority

I drew in to the high bank and heard the familiar exclama-

"Alasdair-by Godl"

Leaving the mapping party on the Curaray, with instructions to proceed overland to the Napo "somewhere to the North", at the completion of their astronomical "sighting", Eric had taken one of the outboard-driven canoes and had gone ahead

on a search for more Indians. Above a village which he had heard was somewhere on the Napo, strange pottery had been pulled from the crumbling river banks and word of this had spread from occasional Indian to Indian and finally to the party on the Curaray. This cut deeply into the mind of Eric, who has much of the antiquarian in his make-up, and after arranging for the hire of more men, he intended to lay his hands on some of this ancient clay moulding for the Heves Foundation in New York

And so here he was, with Indians churning up the black banks of semi sand for the occasional pieces of antique potter's art which appeared in various shapes, though usually no more than six inches across. Eric had fever but despite this fact he was not losing any time Between "rushes of blood" at the disinterest of careless excavations of the diggers, he had been writing like an author possessed, only slowing down to clap at the many aggressive varieties of insect life with an affinity for his neck.

He was as glad as Sonny had been to get his mail and read out to me with a laugh the contents of a New York letter. "Be careful", the epistle warned him; "There is treachery in your midst...."

It took me months to realize that I have been considered the "treachery", owing to my name having been affixed to Albert's "Riobamba-New York" radio'd discussion of an explorer's contract.

I asked Enc why he had needed more Indians, having originally set out with a reasonable complement. After his first two words I knew the answer

"Severa Vargas ..."

Yes, that shrewd old Jibaro, who had denounced the discomforts of the eastern Oriente to me in such vehement terms, had fallen back on an attitude of civil disobedience when Puyo had seemed too far beyond his horizon Vargas, and his sinister underlings, had not accompanied the grinning Sonny up-river solely for the latter's comfort. They had both happened to be going the same way.

With a long mat of sandy hair, parted on the right and dramatically swept backwards to mingle with the lesser ends of ERIC: A HIRSUITE EDITION



the more splendid mop resting on the thick shirted chest, Ene might have stepped directly from a celluloid epic of tom toms and missing men

To offer any other jungle simile would be to describe the life that he and the party actually did live on the Curary, and possibly here on the Napo Faces had perred through bushes, strange native foot punts had been seen on the forest banks opposite the sand prase on which they had camped, and odd noises had been heard during the night. He told me that according to what he had gathered from occasional Indians, the Sabelas emit the cries of animals and bards before they stage one of their gory free for alls. The idea possibly being to allay the suspicions of the intended victums For when danger threatens, it is said that jungle life becomes chillingly quiet. Most of their timp down the Curaray, according to Eric, had been made in an atmosphere of uncamy science. But I do not intend to touch on any of the facts, or exploration which Eric has recorded so modestly in his secently published book.\*

The trees around the Napo "excavation-camp" were tall, thin, and dry, but the jungle retained its impenentiable appear ance. I made several solo excursions for distances up to half a mile into the bush and had great difficulty in shaking off the thorned plants and many ants which attached themselves with determination to my skin. Although I climbed into high branches to survey the country shead, I never discovered signs of native habitation in the virgin forests towards the south Passage through them always had to be made with a markets and bended head.

For a week after my arrival we remained on this site, and whilst I supervised the digging for pottery which had begun to offer a little more of itself than usual, Ene wrote at his table like a maine. Hector was usually sulking somewhere nearly the had my sympathies and, I believe, Enc's as well. He was a long way from home. Apart from his cooking duties his status appeared to be doubtful. To himself he certainly held the position of "overseer". Though "overseer" of what, or whom, was never quite deeded. I used to pitch into the digging and this, as far as Hector was concerned, in the way of

<sup>.</sup> Fever Famune and Gold by Capt. Eric E Loch B.s.o.

the usual native mind, was putting myself on a par with common Indians. He was extremely conscious of his 'spark' of Spanish blood and, although as black as midnight, he enjoyed proclaiming with dignity that "White men" such as himself did not share the habits of the rabble that served as our labourers. It usually required the threat of some physical discomfort to enable him to see the light, and die

I had not brought a camp bed, which would have meant an extra Indian carrier or mule for the trans Andean trip. At night the ants used to creep into my nocturnal 'blanket bag' and, as I slept without pyjamas, every night was a public feast as far as they were concerned. I would awaken with more

markings than a leopard

The Indians were ever conscious that we were camped on the Sashela side of the river. With the excuse that there were too many insects about the camp, they used to sally forth in the evenings under the 'guardian ship' of Hector (who, if the truth were known, was probably also glad to get away) to a sand bank in mid stream.

One morning the tide rose and they narrowly missed a rather moist finish After that their 'fryingpan fire' dilemma

was very apparent

The routine of the day began with a breakfast of rolled oats and cocoa prepared by Hector, after which Enc would head for his pen and papers, whilst I surveyed the Napo's banks from a cance, for other signs of pottery After this, more excavating would begin under my stimulation

Lunch was the least pleasing meal, for boiled or baked yuca caten under that broiling sun, and insect cloud, hadn't the

same appeal as at night.

Or perhaps in the coolness of the evenings, after we had bathed in the hot water canvas "tub" and had sat down to "dine" with a poet's sky of orange and purple, the inspired conversation had eclipsed our palates

Where some people need mountain chalets and immense rooms to plan adventures that surprise the world, Ente's temperament asked merely a camp-fire meal at dusk and a good plue of native tobacco

In such circumstances his exploratory instincts found voice

and rose to geographically threaten every jungle. Eric has always set his lumis beyond those of ordinary men and usually he gets there "or busts". Tenacity is his middle name, and as he sums high he usually has something to exhibit

He asked one what lock we had had in the Llangantes and I told him of the downpours that were slashing the camp when I had left Carl and Mont rambound. As I described the conditions, the obstructionant ravines, the Inca pottery, the guant condors and signs of other mountain life such as the bear-dens which I had often encountered, the "hon" (pums), deer, and topic tracks, and odd calls at night, his seps natrowed

"When I've dealt with the Ssabeles, I'll go there," he com mented, and I knew that the Llanganatis were shortly to be

'KOU",

He was disappointed to learn that weather conditions had limited the mapping up there

"That country is unchartered," he remarked "The west needs a third pass to these jungles and their wealth. I think that the Lianganaus hold the key."

I described how we had attempted to investigate the legend of the treasure in part, and mentioned how my subsequent short journey of two days along the actual landmarks of the guide had taken me to the north of our first course

"There must be no guesswork," he continued, "this country and the Geographical Society wants facts and figures. We must take extensive astronomical bearings, suck to every detail of the guide, and follow the truit to the end."

He eventually did so.

The three Indians to whom I attempted to convey the romance of old pottery were peculiar birds. They never converted much with each other and rarely did their lack of Spanish encourage them to conduct even gesticultory conversation with Enic or myself. The other two who had paddled me all that distance down the Napo, had cleared off an hour after completing their bargain. Assess the more Possibly the sight of so much money (five sucres each) had encouraged them to break from Riviera's ties and, despite his pleas to me to see that they were hustled home in good shape complete on the property of the sight of so of the property of the property of the sight of so of the property of the sight of the property of th

with canoe, they probably looked forward to some Grand New Life on the Amazon. In any case I never saw them again.

But the other fellows who dug for us obviously regarded their own home "fever-spot" as a Utopia compared to this literally buzzing retreat on the Ssabela side of the river.

Enc and I came upon a track which they had made along the river bank. It led over broken tree stumps and through mud to a point from which we could see the camp no longer. There we found a raft of balta logs in a semi stage of construc-

"Odd fellows," was Enc's comment. Obviously this was part of their plan to escape from our "Devil's Isle". But instead of destroying the raft, which somehow would not have been very fair, we decided to move upstream for more Indians, taking along these homesick hypochondrizes.

The mapping party, despite original instructions to proceed up the Napo, had not yet arrived. The next major item on Enc's programme was to enter what he considered to be the Sabela territory. The objection to making the excursion without Indians was that a complement of only one or two would confine the exploratory movements to short treks from a main base. There was always the possibility that the awkar did, as they were rumoured to do, lay those "man-traps".

With several dozen Indians, we could not only put up a formidable front if attacked but also clear a wide track into the territory along which a retreat could be made if common discretion outlined it as being the more logical course.

And so we went upstream, much to Hector's delight and the stupefaction of the foiled "shovel brigade". Progress was very slow and the cance, which was only of moderate size, had to be poled against the moving water.

to be poten against the moving water.

As there were the same wide river strips with their wild dead looking scrub, tall trees and rainbow bird-life, I shall omit repetitive description of that route. However, after a few days we came upon a large native house, set back on piles in a cleared space behind trees, which I had unconsciously slid past on my journey east. It was another of those gigantic cances which drew our attention to the spot.

The possibility of acquiring it and more men, as well as such minor etceteras as fruit, decided us on a halt

We were successful, after many preliminary inquiries as to health, in obbining a canoe from the old Indian "pionecting" this district. Though it wasn't quire as easy as that Anyhow we acquired it and, having done so, bargained for men. In this direction we were not so successful and only managed to obtain two or three. During our overnight stay, the original crew took our small canoe and vanished, so that we had only gained in so far as our new craft was larger, and gave us more state in the toware cranned limbs.

Quite a pleasing purchase was an addition of half a dozen fowls 'These ultimately "rode" on the gunwales which offered quite a lengthy 'run'

After our arrival at this Indian banends (which again had been built away from the Ssabela country) I left Eric fishing for the always reluctantly given information on aukas, and marched down to the river with a cake of soap and towel

Almost at once I stumbled on one of the most revolung scenes which have come my way. Two ancient Indian witches half squarted by the water's edge with a large cooking por balanced on a rock near by. Lying on its back in the river was the corpse of what appeared to be a boy of twelve, and the old women were picking at the entrails of its opened stomach But in the semi-dusk, I had been mistaken. It was not a boy, but a large ape which must have been the nearest approach to the 'Missing Link', bairing my own reflection.

One by one, bits and pieces of the intenor of the animal, which lay as if sleeping in the water, with "size 6' human feet bridging the gap between its anthropoid race and my own, were thrown into the cooking por. After that I walked half amle down the sandy banks before I could concentrate on a swim. My personal firends may rub their hands gleefully but when you have been confronted with the sight of a couple of hags tearing hungrily at the slit pauch of a figure that might be a twin to your own, it is disconcerting.

But further along the bank my revulsions were temporarily obscured by the surprising sight of a gigantic ant 'routemarch' which was wearing away deep grooves across a

neighbouring field. Their traffic was in all cases "one way" and the 'mass-expedition' poured to the river's edge and then up the thick trunk of a tree which hung over the water The returning forces proceeded down the other side of the trunk and began their parade back into the jungle. It was the greatest massing of insect troops that I could recollect I took care not to experiment with them and guessed that big things were happening inside that tree trunk

As that evening meal drew near I experienced a certain gloom Finally when soup was produced-we were guests of the old Indian-I pleaded nausea, which was in no way a perversion of the truth, and announced to Eric that one meal

less per day never hurt any man 'The old fellow is watching, get some of it down," Enc muttered out of the corner of his mouth, fearful that my ungraciousness would cancel the hard won day's bargains of

men, fowls, and the canoe 'Could you palatably stomach giblet juice from a corpse?" I protested, but Eric sensibly intent on preserving peaceful relations gave no show of hearing

Subsequently I appreciated his wisdom and, concentrating on battle ships and the Albert Memorial, I gulped the vitamin'd gruel with sound effects which certainly would have pleased a Chinese host

Next came the monkey meat itself This I consumed with a similarly disconnected concentration. But it was quite good, tasting like chicken. And after this first occasion I was to subsequently have it several times. It had been the vision in the river which had lent insurrection to my stomach

Fruit, as I have intimated, was plentiful around the 'estate' Large oranges were offered to us and we sucked at holes cut in their tops

Perhaps this establishment had a general clean up once a week, but twenty hours after our arrival the same orange rinds and spat out 'stones' lay around on the veranda basket mats

The 'stones' were from fruit which resembled plums with a hard skin, yet this skin encased the 'flesh' and juice of a grape I wrapped up two 'stones' in my pocket and, even tually, on arrival in London put one in a jar of earth beside

our central heating system, where it was discovered and 'dealit' with' by the maid. The second I sent to 'Suttons of Reading'. They passed it on to an eminent man at Kew Gardens who was good enough to supply me with the information that it was the seed of a rare species of something-or-other only found in South America. The something-or-other was, of course, a mightmare in Latin.

A small mess de mode monopoluzed the crude veranda of this Ornetic residence. This "might monkey" was a luxumous chestout shade with a face like a possum. Certainly I should never have called it a monkey for it ran on all fours. Calculating fermiane fur lovers would certainly have bargained for its scalp with cestatic visions of some future church parade, but although it was offered to me, at a price, its preservation as far as Ballos, quite apart from a ting to London, would have set an unancessary dans on my emergency Aspirath hoads.

After another couple of days slow travel up the Napo, the Indians obtained from the old man disappeared in the manner of the others. This happened during an overnight stay at another native but. By persuasion, binbery and the presents uton of many articles of Woodworth's stock one of two members of the local family of seven were persuaded to pole us "iust a little way further."

After this we camped on sandbanks well away from the very cocasional buts that appeared, again encouraging the Indians, with exhibitions of the colourful reward to be won, to again pole "yet a little further." But they were good fellows and stayed with us until other Indians could be found

By this time I had fever, which I had expected, for all mos quitoes regarded my neck as their base and practically every insect came for a cut off these tender British joints Of course Enc already had malaria.

The first, both the minute 'poison injection' and the larger variety, came in never-ending swarms and it frequently seemed impossible to breathe without inhaling a dozen or so of one variety or another. For relief I would the my few bandans seround my neck and face, baring only my cres between these coloured clothes and the tope. On one occasion when I had spooned a black miss from my occos, the taste of which

nad long been obscured by 'fly flavouring', another six or seven dived in It was just as I was about to raise the bandara from my mouth in a swift attempt to drink the mess In disgust and irritated by nips on my forchead and neck, I had another "rush-of blood" and heaved the lot into the river, complete with spoon After this, regret weighed heavily upon me for there were no substitutes amongst the skeleton equipment of this minor party

The nights became fairly bright under a full moon and during one of them when Enc's fever was allowing him a respite and my own tame germ was throwing itself against the bars, I saw a "boo" slide into the river ten feet to my left. Enc at the time was sleeping on my right and he awoke when I rose and stood by the water's edge. We watched its regular half-minute splashes, each one measuring roughly thirty feet. This doesn't mean that the "constitioto" was this length, but when I first saw it, twelve feet of limb thick "tail" was following the preceding coils into the water. The Indians had warned me not to bathe in the sandbank lagoons.

I had seen fewer snakes in Equador than in Malaya where the gardener used to kill several daily. Yet not seeing them here did not mean that the jungles lacked their complement. Those that did cross my path in the Orients had a masty look in their eye.

We received a welcome break in the monotony of river travel when a Quito acquaintance of mine, Dr. Walcott of the Rockefeller Foundation, appeared on the scene, with Riviera's largest dug-out and that great man himself. Accompanying them were Indians to paddle and others lying on their backs, ready to give up the ghost. These had been collected from Napo districts. Walcott was able to supply us with some quantie, which lent a new perspective of the world and our circumstances. He told us that the fever said to be raging in the Oriente was not "yellow", but that the Indians who had it resigned themselves at once to an early end, which made the treatment uphill work.

It is an odd thing, this complete expiration of the determination to live, when any senious illness overtakes a native. As we neared Napo and occasionally drew in to the banks where there were buts, the Spanish speaking member of the crew would investigate and usually come back, climb into the cance and order the others to push off again. In annoyance at this independence we would question the man, always to receive the same reply

"The person is dving"

This was the case at the location of an old desetted native farm. By "desetted" I am using a comparative term Obviously scores of Indians had worked on these weed ravaged clearings with their orange trees, but the only inhabitants now were two women and a man who had fallen from a tree and broken his leg. He had fever as well, and these Indians refused our attention. He was dying, or intended to, and that as far as they were morbidly concerned, was that.

One of the women prepared chicks for our crew There are two, or perhaps several, sorts of chicks But those with which I became familiar were either in the form of a dunk brewed from corm, or else as in this case a food concocted from yuca root And what a food She prepared it under my nose

The yuca was scraped, the woman bit pieces from the root and past them into a leaf lined basket. But they were first well masticated Then, when the basket was filled with its disturbing contents, leaves were covered over the top and the whole thing was stored away in the cance. The reason for this method of preparation is that the saliva from the woman's mouth, mixing with the much-chewed particles of yuca, constitutes a mess which eventually ferments in the basket. This prepared dish is eaten mixed with a little water with much gusto at meal times and gives the Indians great alcohole boost. On two occasions during my subsequent trip to the west. I chose this alternative to huneer.

Passing the whilpool and rapids upstream was not the easy matter that it had been during the descent and the big canoe nearly overturned. The Indians told us that once another canoe carrying gold had fallen victim to this whilpool. One hears odd stones woven around gold in Ecuador. It is a tangible basis on which the Indian imagination can really go into attion.

Amongst the big white, water wom stones in the Napo, I panned several "colours" The metal is there all right and the specks can be seen by just peering into the river. But is it there in workable quantity?

Then in just under two weeks after leaving the site of the pottery excavations, the village of Napo again came into view. It was welcome, for it suggested the end to our Indian problem.

Here we should obtain a workable gang of men I reasoned, casually forgetting my former dilemma at this very place.

## CHAPTER XXVI

OF course we came up against the stone wall. After the first inquiry for men at Napo, I knew how hopless the forth coming 'argument' was to be. Our coaring—our profising of dollar bills—our flaunting of Woolworth commodities was obviously to mean nothing to this peculiar 'obstructionist' attitude of the local inhabitants.

Raviera was still "down nyet" with Dr. Walcott, Maldondows away, what Indians there were with poons in their 'employ' evasively eluded our diplomacy until finally, in diggust and heat, we trekked to the village canteen to work it all out over a sekly red cordat.

But that stakey mess soothed the savage throat and cooled my bram Though a little late, all the wheels began to turn smoothly, and I remembered the words 'that is the house of a grago''. So we inquired about him and found that this grago (here the informant sniffed) had many Indians, and that his name was Sourder

Built with a wide veranda on a small hill, half a mile from Napo village, Souder's house looked south on to the swilling niver bend, from a height that must have ben quite two hun dred feet above the waters. It had only a couple of rooms and an earthen kitchen, but it could boast of the best situation in the district.

Sam Souder appeared to be over six fee in height His nationality was uninistable You could have dressed him in the billowing robes of an Egyptian guide or the costume of a Balkan peasant and the sum total would still have been a bindred per cent American With his sharp features, thin face, grey hair and a lanky body you could practically see the Stars and Stirpes draped across his chest. Yet his speech was an extraordinary blend of three languages

Indians about the house who failed to 'bring back the

bacon" in their own particular department were berated in veteran American punctuated with <u>Quebus</u>, after which Souder, still overcome with disgust would turn and switch our resumed conversation into Spanish. Just as suddenly, five minutes later, he would revert back into flord 'Ulnted States'.

He was a nice fellow, very generous at heart and certainly most hospitable. Working under him as an overseer to the Indians was an Ecuadorian aged about twenty five years. I noted with envy the voracious appetite of this assistant and with surprise the way he proffered us things that belonged to Souder.

The latter's Indians lived mostly across the river and while he thought that he might do something for us, it remained to be seen which Indians were in residence and which were not, for most of them were "on leave".

Having seen what little I had of the padrone system, it had never occurred to me to identify a peon with the idea of a "furlough".

Souder explained His men, he said, panned gold for him "down the river" As soon as an Indian filled a hollow quill with "colouris", he brought it to Souder who "bartered" coloured cloth, shot or gunpowder Indians were always ken for credit and Souder, on the usual conditions that they did not leave until they had worked it off, accommodated their demands But as I have said, he was generous, and, he proclaimed with pinde, "I'm an American." So he gave them "leave".

We canoed over the raver. There were several native houses just inside the jungle which we reached across a wide sandbank. They were usually circular and thatched with curved walls formed by verticle chonta poles, a little thicker than an arm, lashed together with liana. These poles rose to a height of about twelve feet with the conical roof of the building often a good twenty feet above the ground. Around the outside of the circular pole walls, which the thatching overhing, and a wooden band of several pliable saplings with their ends lashed together, and every few tuckes of these lengths bound to a vertical pole. Naturally without 'dove tailing', a great deal of light came in through these walls, which left few shadow in the interior, but duning a windy cloud burst these hus

must have few dry spots. The houses were each built around a main pole as thick as the human body and, inside, the floor was earthen, with a very occasional mat, a bed of poles supported by a thick stake at each comer, and several cooking pots. Most of the women wore one long piece of rough material tied to form a crude dress and their straight hair was cut in long bobs, clipped in a straight line across their brows, susually showing no forchead. They weten t particularly shy and most of the 'poing' ones slung children in the upper half of their toga like middy' divesses.' The few men who were idling around the huts were dressed to the wast, and when we came to see them they half folded their arms and played with their lips in a self-conscious way.

The fact that there were so few of them depressed us Souder shrugged his shoulders and said that most of his men had "cultivation plots" about twenty miles away and he would try to get word through But his remarks, though well mean, were not very heartening, for they lacked enthusiasm. Perhaps his Indians had worked hard and a postponed leave would have upset his planned routine. As far as other matters were concerned he sliways appeared keen to do what he could. So that when, later in the day, we slid away down the Napo with only a couple of men and the promise of more "when a runner gets through to them", we runnated as to how much we had gained by this long trip up-trier.

At each occasional hut, encountered about once in a day's poling, we had picked up a lot of information on lat ankar, our intended Stabela friends It had always to be dragged out, in the way that one has to drag anything pertaining to the Leopard Society, from fightened West African niggers

'Yes," these Napo pioneers would eventually volunteer, they kill and they kill. "

"But what have they killed?"

"They speared my father—they murdered my son—""
"Where?"

"Near the Arajuno

The Arajuno was an affluent of the Napo, and a day below

its village—if you were travelling down with the fast current Souder had shown us two lances, one of about eleven feet, and the other cut to half this size.

"But why out?" I had asked him

"These were pulled from two of my Indians," he had told us, "speared in their canoe, like fish, at the mouth of the Arajuno When? Two months ago

Another settler Indian, who spoke fairly good Spanish, had Said

"Two weeks ago my cousins were fishing, just below the spears packed their Arajuno, we found them dead mouths

Nice people Obviously the place to go was the Arajuno We remembered this river On the way up the Napo we had seen a sandbank opposite its mouth

Only as we neared it did we realize how much we had bitten off Confidently having told Souder to send his Indians to this spot, we now discovered that the proposed camping ground was not only damp rocky sand, but swarming with every flying pest

Eric put on his glasses to keep these midget warplanes from his eyes, and out came my bandanas in an attempt to create a cloth armour

We pitched the "tent fly" so that the open ends faced up and down the Napo, whilst the canvas sides, staked taut to within two feet of the ground, allowed a clear view up the sinister Arajuno rushing in from the south west

Six feet high bushes grew vertically out of the sandbank around the camp They were little thicker than a man's waist, and at night, waving gently in this district of alleged terrorism, they were inclined to stimulate the imagination. But I cut them down after a couple of sleepless evenings so that if we were to be serenaded with "war whoops" at least we should have a better idea of our moving targets. We slept at night with revolvers and accessible ammunition by the pillows but nary a Ssabela crept up to the camp

And there was every reason why To do so, they would have had to swim the fast river. The unfortunates of the past few months, whose life-blood the Ssabelas had mingled with the

OAANGE GROVES 'IN SAN TERNANDO NALLEY TUST BEVOND



Arajuno waters, had invariably been caught dawdling on the southern side.

Souder had told us another story of an Ecuadorian with an Ornette baunda in the shadow of the Andes, a day's journey south from Napo The fellow's name was Carlos Sevilla and three months before, he had elimbed out of bed for the first time for name months. And the reason?

With a crew of seven Indians polning his large "dug-out" up the river, he had been stretched back cleaning a gun barrel under the "leaf-canopy". It was midday and the sun directly overhead had burnt through until the canoe had finally been directed in towards the shady banks

Time had slid by as the polers, laboriously heaving against the current, had grunted rhythmically into the peacefulness of those overhanging boughs. With the slapping of water against the prow, the quietness of the forest's winged life, and the soothing coolness enveloping the dug-out, a suggestion of sanctuary had lent itself to the watercourse.

But the shrill cry of a bird suddenly pitched itself across the silence, and Sevilla, tired of shining his gun, had prepared to load it at the sound

A bag of jungle-fowl would be a welcome change from yuca, he had edged with bent head to the opening of the canopy

Almost immediately the sky had rained brown naked bodies. They had dropped from thees and overfanaging boughs and bounded from the bank on to the canoes, shrieking with spears in hand. Quickly they had begun to despatch his men, and just as swiftly he had tried to raise his gun. But it had been knocked from his hands. Losing no time he had sprung to the gunwales and dwed overboard. But not soon enough. As he had plunged to the water a spear had struck him between the shoulder blades but, because he was flinging himself forward, he escaped its full force. The dive had shaken it from his body and he had allowed the swift stream to carry him away under water. Some distance down he had climbed out ex hausted He managed to stay the bleeding, and finally found his way to a firendly native camp.

So the Ssabelas did not only attack at daybreak! For the first two days we paddled over to the Aukas side Thick overhanging jungle, such as Sevilla had mentioned, leant well over the banks practically into the water

The rest of the expedition were long over-due There had, of course, been the mapping to do systematically, but taking this into consideration our parties should have merged two weeks before In coming ahead with three purposes, Enc had found that only one had not run according to plan He was yet without a proper gang of Indians They had been promised, yes, but it was difficult to be happy about that promise

Three weeks slid by on that torturous, fly infested strip of

sand during which we watched and waited for something or somebody to turn up The canoe Indians, which we had finally sent back to Souder with an indignant note, had not reappeared with a reply Despite our noctumal alertness, and dramatic precautions, there had been no sign of the "dreaded" Ssabelas whose "war stage" was alleged to be this section of the Oriente And every day we had strained our eyes southwards, through the insect clouds, trusting expectantly that the big expedition "dug-out", with its quinine and full equipment, would suddenly round the bend and produce George, Peter, 'Sparks", Castillo the interpreter, and the various 'steps andstairs' of Indian humanity allied to the expedition cause All that we did see was the swirl of the 'Arajuno-Napo' rendezyous, the sinister half-dead looking jungle of the high Ssabelacountry riverside, new winged 'irritants' arriving to annoy us, and Hector usually doing something not in accord with Eric's requirements After particularly maddening attacks from the flies, I would tear off my clothes and rush into the river Once, when I did this, a fish bit my toe, and I came out with 'superextraordinary' speed

By night a jungle-lion occasionally lent vocal colour to the moonlit quietness and frequently a crack that approached thunder heralded the crash of a high branched forest giant from the southern banks or Sabela side of the Napo

By day black vultures floated about and flapped on to the sand near the camp They just sat there with apparently no purpose whatsoever I don't think that they were ghoulishly covering Eric or myself.

The whole reason for our drawn-out seance of heel kicking, in this 'Garden of Satan', was lack of Indians and ammunition Souder, if he wished, could have provided the former, and the latter, which was being rationed under the watchful eye of George, was with the down river party. After stringing together the few colonific details gathered up and down the Napo, on the habits of Ssabelas, a carefree trek into the 'Biomet's enset', with only Hector and a couple of carners, did not seem to be an entirely judicious move. In a way similar to the trigonometrical manner by which the position of a fog bound "radio-equipped" aeroplane is determined, Eine considered that he had plotted the position of the auka 'head-quarters', which of course was not the same as their hunting-ground.

All reports had mentioned a large auks town, built of highroofed houses, on a mountain plateau There were not a great number of mountains in the Orients but the one which the Napo residents and others had claimed hid the Saabela retreat was appropriately the foremost of them, a black hill rising above the distant southern jungles

Several miles below Napo village we had drawn into a small southern tributary of the Napo and, having proceeded a suggested distance up it. Enc had climbed one of the taller trees and stared through his binoculars to try sporting the auka "town" which a more loquacious native had claimed could be seen on the mountain slopes.

But the distance was still too great to determine whether there was abbitation on those faraway black patches even through glasses Taking them from Enc. I found that I could make out no more than he had, and I gave up trying in case imagination should slip its leasth.

And now we were at the 'corner' of these Upper Amazon affluents which a dozen sources of information confirmed to have been the scene of the most recent Ssabela performances

More days went by in which the open tent fly feebly attempted to stay the attacks of rain storms, scorching sun, and pests With it all Hector's fertile brain created new ways of getting its owner into trouble, fever blurred our vision to

regard his youthful cussedness as monstrous treachery, and when, to kill the monotony of the continual round of starchy yuca (which was already binding disastrously in our 'bread baskets'), he experimented unsuccessfully with the last 'root' and final piece of fish, it was too much for Eric.

Even in this complex mental state of 'neurosis-cumharassed-oblivion' (due to the psychological effect of perpetually waiting and being marooned for weeks with the expectoration of fites as our sole occupation) I could not avoid being weakly overcome by the sight of a white bearded monster, towering to a height of six fect two, and a small black boy, both exchanging home truths

Diack boy, both exchanging home truths

On this occasion Hector issued another of his daily
resignations and to his surprise had it accepted But of course
he could do very little about it for there was no means of
getting away, with our only cance still on courier service upriver.

We still had a little food, although we had preferred to

leave it clucking after worms along the sand bank.

If it had only just "clucked" But that cockerel, oblivious
to the virtues of self-control, was too often tempted to higher
word expression.

Enc struggled with himself Was not the loss of a friend too high a price to pay for mitigated neural anguish? He was fond of this white bird with its jaunty red comb curring over to the left in the manner of his own. No, he couldn't do it. That husky leghorn meandering over the sand lent a friendly note to the seene. So Hector, instead of placking feathers, was encouraged to hunt for more yuca behind the

But time, the foundation of bonds such as the one between Enc and this bird, outlined the division between our sentiments towards it. To me it was merely an acquantance. No rooster had been added to my culinary equipage, when I first headed for the Orients, to subsequently encourage my heart to forestall my stomach. No white leghtom had accompanied me through the few tribulations of my treks to subsequently contaminate the logic of my hunger, or my nerves. On the principle that an offending eye should be plucked out, each brow searing screech confirmed to my malarial brain that similar dealings with feathers would be in order

Following the increasing paucity of after dinner "tit bits", which had always gone direct to Enc's "pal", the crowing became more and more frequent Tlearnt to find relief only by gripping tight handfuls of sand, and found myself waiting for the sound that unconcordantly dived into our ears at regular intervals. Eric felt it But—he propounded—it was a nice bird and—

So I schemed I announced that I was hungry and must have 'flesh' Of course I wasn't at all, for fever and hunger take different routes

No, no Not that Anything but that Hang on a bit, relief would come, Eric had maintained

Momentarily I reviewed the inhumanity of my instincts, it was not the leghorn, merely my brain, I told myself

A truculent screech flew once again around the camp The bird didn't know it but its death sentence had been sounded "Meat' immediately became my obsession.

Eric finally gave way, and he coupled revolver practise with the 'unpleasant' job in hand

With the last staccato burst, I rubbed my hands No more should my aggravated spine shudder beneath the high pitched blasts of such piercing, vociferous expression. No more tautened 'straining' for the noise to come I blood thurstily congratulated myself on the successful exploitation of my plan Ha haa, ha haa, ha haa, ha has, ha has

Hector served it steaming on the tin plates It had been sometime since "chicken" had monopolized the menu His eyes glinted with thoughts of the share that would be his

Unhappily my interior refused to co-operate with my former pretence. That evening few genialities passed between Eric and myself

One morning two pleasing sights raised us from that disheartening coma which had been enveloping us step by step

Two canoes appeared from up and down stream within an hour of one another The first brought word from Souder and the second carried news of the mapping party arriving from the

Souder was "doubtful" about his Indians He didn't know whether he could let us have any.

I have referred to the news from him as being one of the "heattening" things of the day Bad news, yes, but this was one of the few circumstances where it was better than on news at all The distress of waiting all that time without knowing whether Souder was doing anything, or even bothering to think about us, had been extreme Had we known earlier what his message had obviously intimated between the lines, rafis might have been built to float with the current towards the 'party' down stream.

Enc's anxiety over their non appearance was naturally greater than the fact that Souder's Indians had never come

And when that 'Napo bound' canoe called in on that same morning and said that, only a day below our sandy camp, George was temporanly recovering from a fever bout, before proceeding up stream with a big canoe and a lot of equipment, it completely erased the despondency that had been creeping over us.

What of the others? The Indian had not been sure, he knew that they had had fever, but he imagined that they were also on their way up-stream.

It was obvious that we should have to return to Napo for men, despite the stonewall attitude of the village But Eric was anxious to sit tight until at least he had seen George

During the next two nights my fever wandered in the wrong direction. Now that the canoe had returned, I decided to go back to Napo where the natives had said two doctors had arrived from the West to treat the Indians. I felt that they might have some quinine and could possibly give me an injection.

Leaving Eric with a few roots of yuca which the canoe's crew of two had brought back with them, I began the tip up-stream in the open dug-out I only remember patches of it as the anophele bug was making a long "field day out of its sojourn in my body.

There was an occasion when the two men in the canoe had

leapt into the river with a net and made a catch of savage piranus, the fish which are said to be capable of cutting down a horse crossing a river They were about a foot in length with long sayage teeth and the Indians killed them by biting them behind the head

I staved one night at the hut of a river native and was past caring that I shared a basin of chicha, and next morning another squashy dish, with his family, "Second hand mastication" I used to call it when watching the Indians tackle the pulpified mess, and this seemed an appropriate label. I are only to keep a certain amount of strength though the consumption of even a chef prepared Western dish would not have been without effort.

The native settler told me that he had actually seen many Ssabelas just inside the jungles across the river and that he had had conflicts with them. Somehow his manner in supplying the information did not encourage belief in this story

After three days, again poling up between those highfoliaged river banks, past the whirl pool and up over the rapids with their large white boulders. Sam Souder's river bend hove into sight. It had not come too soon. Even sufficient energy to sit seemed to have fled from my frame.

The canoe banged alongside the rocky ledge, below the slippery path, which wound up a fifty feet mud bank towards Souder's house on the hill

I slowly pulled myself upright until I was standing unsteadily in the current-slapped dug-out. I motioned one of the Indians to let me"strap-hang" to his neck But he shrugged, not understanding, and I fell into the river

# CHAPTER XXVII

THE Indian who had paddled down and fished my grateful carcass from the current, delivered me onto Souder's doorstep
Souder in turn poured his own cures down my gullet and
doctored me for a week He was a kind fellow, which fact I

doctored me for a week He was a kind fellow, which fact I have already mentioned and I am grateful to him
He was living a very lonely life He had, he said, come to the

Orients to die I laughed at this for the fire in his make up kept him hopping like a cat with singed paws and if anyone ever looked ready for the grave, it was not Sam

Orsente

During the seven days in which I occupied his own bedroom and he slept in a veranda hammock, he told me about himself He was a man who seemed to have packed more wars into his existence than any other I have met The Spanish American conflict figured as one of the more colourful episodes of his "active" life, which had eased down slowly with a final job on the Guayaquil Quito Railway. That was where I had heard his name before I remembered the friendly references of the American ticket supervisor to Souder's disappearance into the

"We could never figure out why " the railway official had begun meditatively But a little of Souder's conversation had told me the reason

Some people are fortunate enough to make a success of matrimony. He had been one of them and this institution had become the basis of the vital existence which both he and his partner had felt that nothing could shake. But to many of us

meant when he had identified his life in the Oriente with the expectation of death. He and his wife had never been long

apart and Sam considered that this would continue to be the case.

Yet, as I have said he was a vigorous man. One could not ignore the fact, and I often drew his attention to this—suggesting that he should go back "West". Not just across the Andes, but home to America. I knew his position was such that he could afford it and this he confirmed When I put the idea to him his eyes had lighted and he had spoken of his "home State", before he had shrugged his shoulders and guessed that he would "lie down in the Orneth". But he often spoke about "Home" during my sopourt under his roof, and finally so frequently that I used to wonder—

Yes, it is my belief that the "old United States" as he called them, had not seen the last of its wandering son. And the reason? Somewhere in Ecuador, Sam had a daughter "needin" a proper edication"

"And she's just like her mother

Having heard of the proximity of the expedition, and that Enc was keen to meet him, Carlos Sevilla, who had been speared in his canoe by Sabelas, made the journey to Souder's home. He was a tall, wry, olive skinned fellow, goodlooking with a black line of a moustache and a dark head of sleekly parted hair

Sevilla arrived in a khaki shirt and breeches with high black of a civilized drawing-room I very much doubt that he would have lacked feminine attention. But there was nothing effeminate about this muscular fellow who, besides being educated, was intelligent

He hearthy agreed that to be "sheet bound" was the nexttung-to-a living-death and mentioned that he had 'cojoyed' more than a liberal dose of it. I recollected Souder's ancedote of Sevilla's introduction to the autor and not unnaturally I asked him to outline the incident in gory detail.

Repeating what Souder had told me he added that his men distant an expedition to the scene of the Stabela attack next day. Laid out on the river bank had been the seven speared bodies of his companions, each corpse being found pleatifully stuck with lances, which were also rainmed into the mouths of the victims. Nearby they had found the body of an auka.

"So you know something about Ssabelas?" I commented facetiously.

"I am disinclined to learn more," had been his reply.

He had "cultivation plots" on a tributary of the Curaray. The resident Indians had fought off several auka attacks.

Sevilla could not stay long enough to wait for Eric's appearance in Napo, and he returned up a tributary to his battenda. Before doing so he invited me to stay a night if ever I went through to Baños I made a mental note to make this possible, Sevilla had in his possession the ornaments of the dead auka.

I noticed that Souder was without his assistant.

"Yep, I had to fire him . . ."

Sam had told this fellow that if sitting around on the veranda all day smoking away the canteen tobacco was the correct interpretation of the duties of an overseer, then he couldn't afford one.

There was nothing vindictive about Souder and he descriptively outlined his disgust for people who were.

His "assistant" had taken petty revenge by damning Sam still more to the villagers, to whom, it transpired, he had constantly boasted of the dupes that he had "put across" his employer. This explained why the soft-drink vendor of Napo had sneered when I had ongunally inquired about Souder. Sam always liked to be finendly with everyone and the 'poisontrail' left by this young overseer, was preying on his mind.

But when he came in to talk he soon managed to forget these things. Discovering how sociable he really was under that "individualist" extentor, I was even more decided that this lonely Oriente should not have been for him. The long discussions that he also had with Eirc seemed to have given him a new interest in the "outside".

My strength came tumbling back after a week of his "treatment" and I asked him about a canoe to go back and join the party. "See one of those Napo doctors first", had been his advice, and we had sent word along to the village But they of the victims Nearby they had found the body of an askiz.

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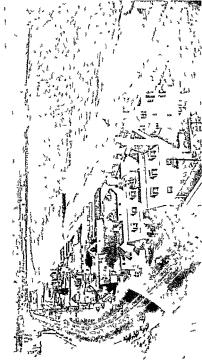
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ad gone back to Quito, having taken many photographs of he revolting external effects of Orant diseases. After a lot of discussion with Sam I reluctantly decided to go also to Quito, as the malanal attacks following on the tysentery had shaken me up. It did not appeal to me to leave inc at the most colourful part of the show, just when the party? really were showing up. The intention of tracking the adult to their lair was to be the next item on the programme. I only hoped that I should get back from Quito in me

Sam lent me a camp bed when I left him, for the advantage of sleeping above the level of a marshy trail was obvious. When I had shaken hands and expressed only half my apprenative feelings, I turned down the path towards Napo know, that I was leaving behind a good man and a hard one. Hardened to the Orients, hard to himself and hard to his findians. But not for hard to them. For he was an "American" and his peons "went on leave".

'All-day' treks through jungles usually amount to the same thung, the expenditure of energy, the desire to "push on" and a 'fatigue-obscuring' vision of the trail. But it stands clearly in my mind, though I prefer to avoid superlatives, that what I did see of it managed to approach my typical conception of a mighimate. Three times in the black slush of that several-day slog to Puyo, I had to combat repulse who refused to conocide "nght-of way". Each time I won the bout, although on the third occasion, with eleven feet of black backed, white-stomached scripent giving me the high-powered glance, I had less confidence in my yard long 'snake-swatter' than before. But these incidents all had satisfactory endings and apart from having my toes again sampled by vampires, I had no further altercation with jungle-life, with the exception of the insect variety.

The Ballos 'pass', through which I intended to reach the "West" was something over a hundred miles from Napo, whilst Puyo was roughly eighty miles. Speed records over measured distances naturally depend upon the condition of the course. If I trekked at half a mile as hour I usually congratulated myself There was the familiar business of leaping from root to root, at which I now felt an old hand, in the wake of the loin-clothed Jibaro carrying my duffle. Having not the slightest interest in anything beyond the fact that he had been instructed in Quichua to deposit it in Puyo, this man frequently disappeared from sight. For a whole day I would lose him altogether, but as darkness drew on I would find him waiting by the trail and very soon we would "call it a day"

After four immersions in the violent Napo tributary, on which Sevilla lived, I had eventually arrived at his hattida, which was a two-floored "house" in a cleaning dotted with hanana tree.

There are some people who possess the subtle ability to cloak a deluge of hospitality under the semblance of ordinary "house hold routine". Sevilla was one of them

During my overnight stay, he showed me a lengthy 'neck let' of brilliantly green partot feathers, that had been taken from the shoulders of the dead Ssabela, and several auka lances, such as Souder possessed

I met a young Ecuadorian police detective also putting in a night under Sevilla's roof He was on his way to Tena which I had gathered was the ecclesiastical base of the northern October

It appeared that since I had been in that village the body of a nun had been found in the river. The detective carried a 'pearl handled' revolver and hand-cuffs

As Tena had a radio link with the outer world I asked him if he would send a message through to Quito, which he agreed to do, but there was a slip between the cup and the Irp, and the few important words which I had scribbled on a piece of paper,

were never delivered

The Indians around Sevilla's house killed a boa-constrictor
just as the detective and I were heading in opposite directions
The snake took some time to die, and struck at a boy when it
had been considered a thoroughly deceased repule.

Beside the first section of the way to Puyo, hurtling waters rushed over tremendous boulders heading in the direction that

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I had come at a speed that seemed to be at least thirty miles per

hour

Then I had crossed empty river courses which in the wet season were probably as violent. I stepped down beside those white, rounded boulders, but saw no gold where those waters had only run for part of the year. After this had come a great deal of slushy climbing despite the fact that the Andes were well to my right

Frequently, when I caught up with my two-legged duffle bag, I would motion for a breather as the fever that had been stayed for a few days was again in the offing. But the Jibaro was usually only acquiescent for a few moments. Then he would shake his head and move off down the trail attempted authoritative argument in the language which he didn't know, he would point eastwards without looking round and mutter the few words which the Spanish tongue seemed to lave lent to Quebus, "lat infilter lat askat."

Perhaps among his people this was an effective stimulation to lotterers. But it was possible that the Saabelas did come as far west as this. I had heard in Napo that the village was always expecting a raid from them.

It was some time since I had eaten, but this fact in no way gave me concern for my appetite unfalingly went on furlough whenever that 'anophele bug" paid a visit, and the latter appeared quite prepared to take a ride to the 'West', thank you.

But since the conditions of the route many times eclipsed those of the Jondachi morass, I knew that I should have to gulp something to keep the carburettor feeding 'mixture' to the envine

"Mixture" is right. When it came to the dyspeptical show down, I fell back on more chiche from a native hut. There had been no edible alternative.

The woman who eventually produced it had done so with certain misgivings Fortunately, however, she could speak Spanish.

'Have you any food that I might buy, 'I had asked her

"My husband is away," was the reply and she had edged further inside.

"I have not come to see your husband, I wish to buy food . . ."

"My husband is not here," came a faint reiteration and she

had disappeared into the shadows of the interior.

But a few words from the carrier in Quiebus, who sketchily understood me but with whom I had never been able to converse, seemed to allay certain of her doubts and, encouraged by the sight of a few centaros, she emerged carrying a gourd. Shortly afterwards as I was about to drink from a clear stream, I came face to face with many reasons for her hesitation ever any reflecting water had caught the vision of a mad monk, it was this strip in front of me.

Murored in this unripoled creek were the wildest unshaven features, set with red, staring pin points, that I had ever seen. The topee did nothing to lend confidence to the picture and the muddy tom clothing would have been very welcome at the hub of a cabbage field I should have looked better in a loin cloth Certainly in the latter garb I could easily have qualified for early tribal initiation, for my skin had turned a greenishyellow colour, and considering the painted Orients faces that I had seen, I stood a good chance of taking the prize at any jungle-fetish.

The sight of another hut at the crest of that 'piggery' wallow' was too much-too good to be true

Unending bog, and two days, had slipped behind me since the consumption of that last dish of chicha Bog, morass, mud, and marshland It had seemed that these were the only ele-

ments of that journey through the foodless jungles

And as I waded nearly to my thighs, across the black, sloppy patch beneath this high slope, I felt very strangely that my spirit was drowning and that the raised hut up there above me was the straw at which it clutched If it had not been for some of these spicy hallucinations, for which I could thank my old friend the anophele mosquito, the sheer monotony of con stantly struggling out of slush and through the sticky black soil, would have banished that spark of logic which discouraged private debate as to the sum total of it all

On the United States liner, and in New York, I had been in-

troduced to a pleasing 'new' breakfast dish "Hot Cares with Maple Strup and Metred Butter".

And this had been the foremost of the 'visions' which had come to haunt me and stimulate my trek along the trail

Hot cakes, hot cakes, my brain had reiterated, and continuously I had 'mouthed' in the manner of a St. Bernard eyeing a tea trolley I determined that when I eventually reached New York, all other matters could run and play with Satan, I should buy an electric hot-cake plate and turn out unending 'tender hown' contributions to my stomach

But it was paradoxical Had I actually encountered a plate of "hot cakes" being shipped along that trail, I should have been surprisingly unwell Such are the contradictory yearnings of permicious malaria

At least a dozen people were living in the two-roomed hut which had been built on high stakes above the sloppy ground Undermeath a cown, flicking its tail at the accumulating mos quitoes, resignedly peered around the stickiness for grass that wasn't there and finally gazed down into the dark forests already deserted by the setting sun

Its owners appeared just as pleased to see me, as I was to see them Marooned as they were above this slippery area it seemed to be quite a "break" for them to encounter a new face even if it was green and shaggy Or perhaps I am pressuming too much Perhaps, as with Sevilla, it was merely that their conception of sociability knew no bounds

I made them understand that I needed food, and inquired as to whether it could be obtained quickly 'They looked at each other, assured me that it could and, as a stop-gap, produced a 'hot bath' in a tin.

This was most unexpected and I was glad of it because I had "jiggers" in my feet Seeing me pull them out, by the light of my lamp, their conversation again became animated, and after a short interval I was led through the darkness into another room.

With a great deal of surprise I found a bearded and temporarily bed ridden American, an invalid, because he also had an extreme case of "jiggers". This gave our conversation a galloping start and I was able to doctor my feet with my new friend's "certain cure" He had been a taxidermist and had also collected butterflies for one of the Rothschilds

A gourd of watered milk with a little rice was brought to me warmed It was nourishing, but when I had consumed it, I was unhappy to learn that for days these people had, for some reason or another, been without food. The only sustenance that they could obtain was from the cow, and they had forced most of it on me

The American shrugged "Yes, they like to see a strangerfew gringes come near here," was his explanation

He advised me to cover my feet and to tie my camp net tightly during the night as there were bats about When I told him that they had already taken a dreg or two of Scottish blood and asked how a bat was able to manage this without awakening its victim, he explained that by fanning the toes lightly with their wings, they could anæsthetize the punctured skin

With his own feet bound for protection from further "jiggers", this hunter of Oriente fauna found it difficult to stand on them Yet I was awakened in the middle of the night by a gun blazing off beside my head With a torch on the barrel this old man had shot a rabbit from the window Next day I learnt how far its meat could go There were four whole gourds of gruel and still it seemed that a complete rabbit hung up "to dry"

An intelligent, generous fellow, this American. And he had

often been in London It was strange that I should have found him 'bed bound' in this wilderness, for the moment, anyhow,

one of the world's forgotten men

## CHAPTER XXVIII

THE 'owner-chauffeur', who probably had not paid off the last instalment, ran his eyes in detail over my attice, and looked several times at my feet, before unlocking the gates to Eden. Had he possessed any covering or old newspapers, he would certainly have lined the interior. But I was past carng what he thought as I dragged my wet raggedness inside. It was only when I relaxed into the massive cushioned seats of this monster Studebaker saloon and studied the pertly flash American wear of the draver and his pal that I realized my sudden link with civilization.

I almost felt afraid of it. Perhaps "self-conscious" is more appropriate. A weakness pervaled my stomach on considering the normal hygienic standards of civilian life and the labour ahead necessary to evolve a silk purse from the sow's ear that I had become

My whiskers had sprouted in disconcerting shades from coal black to ginger and I knew that never at any time could that scalp matting of dired jungle-mire' be identified with the words' 'Crowning Glory'' Gangs of bores in each cylinder snorted in response to the

Indian behind the wheel, and the ponderous automobile churned away the freshly-cut trail with its bottom gear.

The Rio Pactors will elabed on towards the Amazon reversal.

The Rio Pastaza still slashed on towards the Amazon several hundred feet below to the left, as it had for the last thirty or forty miles from Puyo.

Puyo, the home of a chieftain of "head-shrankers". Puyo, where I had seen barefooted, cotton bloused, raven haired Indian women blood thirstily fall upon a feebly kicking butchered cow Puyo, the home of men who are rarely in residence.

My remaining impressions were of fifteen or sixteen large huts, surprise at seeing a telegraph station "so far from home"

--,

(despite the fact that I had known of its existence) and a chance meeting with two young Germans on the river, one tall and dark, the other stocky and blond

They were trying to "settle" on an untamed jungle slope As neither of them seemed entirely happy about it, I had asked them why they had left Germany for such an extreme life One of them had looked at me with pursed lips, and I had understood.

And now as the roar of the black Studebaker eclipsed that of the passing Agoyan Falls, I thought of the narrow rock hewn path in the perpendicular walls behind me which had partly crumbled away in last night's storm. Until the trail could be cleared I had stumbled from the darkness into a dry hut to sleep amongst twenty-eight Indians who had all shared a curiosity to study the graps in somnolent repose.

Food! A meal! Hot cakes! When I had seen the car (the result of a wire from Puyo to Ambato) along the track several miles cast of Baños, these had been the only concerns of my mind. I was certain this time that the needs of head and abdomen conceided

A "roll down to Rio" might have its points, but a lively arrival in Baños behind a scarem Indian driver can also be appreciated after a sojoum in the Oriente.

At 7 a m. the gravel of the 'sun lit' Villa Alemana yard crackled and catapulzed from beneath the wire wheels of this outsize in motor cars. The fact that I arrived this way instead of with a swag on my back cutbed any apprehensions which might have arisen in Frau Von Hartrot at my doubtful appearance. Without waiting for more than a cursory explanation she fluing an "abracadabra" at the house-boy and in a moment conjured steaming coffee, hot toast, butter and marmalade. I made a mental note to 'remember,' this good lady before sharing the common end

My intunstion that one cannot be hungry with fever hardly seems to fall in line with the fact that I sent out a second SOS for toast But the "anophele bug" must have been taking time off A "Blue Gillette" blade, hot water, and an invasion into Von Hartrott's wardrobe played a big part in the next hour And, as if fate had meant to be kind and temporarily

take my mind right off the morass now behind. I emerged to find another Briton breakfasting in the sun.

He said he was from "Mahn-chester" and when I asked him why he was so far from home, he remarked that he had "seen it coomin' . . "

4'It?" "The blewdy war .."

He had sold a big business and "got owt"

"What's next on your programme?"

He pointed to the world's greatest mountain range

"Ah'll take a coople of pahk mewles an' settle across thow-se . . ."

"Do you know anything of the conditions there?"

"Lahd, A've got it all plahnned . . ."

The grev-clad figure in the 'pyrama like' uniform crept again into the shaded bedroom of that Quito hotel

"Señor . . Señor . . ."

He was bending beside the bed with a brown paper parcel

in his arm, ready to gabble into my car "Yes? What? Go away---"

"But, Senor, this time something special . ."

"All right then, but hurry up-"

The close-cropped head of the room servant bowed lower as he looked at the door and unwrapped the parcel that he carried.

"Very, very cheap!"

"A bottle? Scent-?"

I rose up to focus my eyes more clearly on what he had brought The creado began his sales-talk.

"Very fine perfume."

"I wouldn't even sprinkle that on a horse, where did you get it?"

"Oh---"

"Never mind, go away."

"But very fine perfume, Señor . . . all the hotel boys use st . . ."

"Get out."

"Watt, Seffor, watt-

The high 'Cherokee-type' cheekbones projected further as this amateur "bootlegger" unfolded more of the brown paper to peddle further of his wares.

"Ourl"
"Señor, señor . . !"

The fellow practically dumped the whole parcel on the bed in his effort to unwrap it quickly. In a minute he had found what he sought and held it under my nose in cupped hands. A small black face peered from between his thumbs.

"See, Señor . a tsantsa . ."

In turn he produced three more, with a foot of glossy black hair hanging to the crown of each. About ten lengths of small cord hung from the lips of one "shrunken head", and in every case these had been drawn together. I could imagine the exception that would have been accorded such a trophy by my maiden aunts in London. It was almost worth making a deal. But a law is a law and I had no wish to jeopardize the good work of the party still in the Oriente.

The Islantia carried my mind back there to the Jibaro chief, and as the hotel room boy, seeing that there was again to be "no sale", gloomily gathered up his ghoulish merchandise, I wondered what secrets the hur of old Severa had held. He had been away when I called at Puyo. Sonny eventually told me in New York that the Jibaro had 'shown' him many shrunken animal heads but had put nothing further on display.

Now that I was alone again I relaxed and my mind, gradually finding itself unchecked, ran on—ran away—ran not—

Puyo—Severa—Ssabelas—Puyo—how much further?—hot

cakes mud mud chicha mud Mann it was the old "anophele" back at the fold.

Dr Carlos Andrade Marin who treated me advised an early departure from the country There was "no chance", he said, of going back to the Orients—

"Unless you want to stay there," he had grinned

Well, I was keen to see Ssabelas, but not sufficiently so to choose their country for my spiritual descent into Old Nick's kingdom So I radio'd Enc to this effect and decided to eath the Santa Clara sailing from Guayaquil in three days' time. My

energy was coming back and I watched my bags packed into the luggage compartment of the train with comparatively high spirits It had suddenly struck me that I missed the London from which I had been away for so long and also I was anxious to see a little more of the United States Furthermore the Santa Clara was one of the Grace Liners that called at Havana Life was assuming a very pleasant aspect. Ever since the vitality of rumba music had spread to Europe, Cuba had paraded across my visional imagination

It was just "on time" I swung up to the observation platform as the husky little engine prepared to jerk the carriages away The moment came and the crowd drew back

But these things suddenly meant nothing to me. I could only

appreciate one damnable fact I HAD IT AGAIN! A final tug of the train reacted all the way down the line of couplings The Observation Car suddenly bounded forward

I fell off the end. The station became deserted as I sat on my haunches beside

the fence dimly seeing the last wisp of smoke drift away I felt like a fool

Always allowing a little bug to bowl me over-first the river, and now a railway track. There was not much comfort in the fact that it was probably the same "wog" that had laid out Pizarro's expedition of four thousand Indians And now most of the taxis were leaving the station yard. I caught the last straggler, and returned to bed.

"Make it a double dose, I can catch that train at Riobamba."

"Well there's no chance of it in this condition." The American luxury liner, Cuba and New York, seemed

suddenly a long way off I took the 'shot' and slept until Mann called again at eight that evening I realized my position. All my luggage was on its way to the

coast and there wasn't another boat for a week.

"That train will be in Riobamba until the morning, Dr ----"

" Cut the idea right out." "But you can give me another shot and I'll scrounge an OFCE-COSt----\*

The doctor thought for a minute.

"Perhaps if I could find a closed car"

It was a Ford "Vee-eight" saloon The driver had no money for petrol so I paid him in advance and about nine o'clock we sought the 'Riobamba' road

"Lights," a Quito policeman had shouted on the outskirts of the town

"Why lights," I asked the driver who merely shrugged in reply, but as we moved over the city limits, I discovered that the head lamps showed practically no more than a glimmer

The long and short of this journey was that ten miles outside Quito I climbed out of a telescoped car, into a water ditch.

On the road lay the warm corpse of an ox.

At eleven that night, I set out once more from Quito This time in the most sturdy looking car that I could find, with a powerful beam that cut the darkness for a considerable distance in front of the car By 4 a m we had reached Riohamba

Many people were leaving to catch the Santa Clara and the Hotel Metropolitano was full So I approached the one to which I had pursued a shricking tout on my very first arrival,

and here I managed to win an hour's sleep

At daybreak both hotels emputed to fill the trains that were straining to leave for the north and south I was surpused to find Carl and Mont among the passengers The latter was also catching the Santa Clara, Carl was to stay another fortinght. Neither of them said that they had very much to report. The rains had continued The lake in the shoulder of Cerro Hermoso had disclosed nothing

This latter fact coincided with my propounded ideas. With the Valverde trail taking a different bearing to our Cerro Hermoso route, and several mountains in a position to call themselves "three peaked", this "exploration of the legend" had been a "long shot". I had also seen quite a number of lakes in the Llanganatus which had looked as if they could have been artificially created by the diversion of a cascade. So that for the present, anyhow, the "Treasure of the Incas' lay where Valverde had left it But I knew that Ene would give the

legend a run for its money, after his dealings with the Ssabelas

"But the bank sent me this and this confirming

The Guayaquil official smiled with polite tolerance

"Yes, yes, but that refers to the amount that was forwarded to Quito"

This time I counted to five only

"I arranged through London that deposits for similar sums were to be made—and held—both here and in the Quito bank, and look, they have notified me to say that it was done." But officialdom having come to a decision prepared to

altenate ttelf from further discussion. It cared not in the least that hotel bills, provisions, Ormate transport, cars, mules, medicanal and other expenses had ravenously absorbed the packets of sucres once owned by this captious fellow outside the cage?, to the extent of leaving him only a dollar or two Officialdom had blandly closed the interview, and that was that

that

The British consul seemed surprised at my 'emerald' bue. I
outlined to him my financial predictament and explained that I

had wired Quito unsuccessfully four times
Acting on his advice I approached the bank in a certain
manner, with success But this success' came late My lost
deposit was subsequently forwarded to the New York branch
some time afterwards without explanation, apology, or noufcation

My last few sucres were spent wiring London to make a deposit in Havana. Finally, rattling a couple of antows in my pocket, I took the Grace Line launch and chugged out to the Soula Clara in mid tiver.

## CHAPTER XXIX

"WOTTA block-"

Which ever way you looked at it that's just what the Hudson River was If, of course, you could look at it My breath blurred the windows and it needed a constant handkerchief rub on the pane to see a thing And what did I see? Yes, just what——?

Was that the Statue of Liberty? No, a ship, I think, but what other fool ship would try to break through the field of ice that was New York harbour?

Thick ropes of snow dashed on the outside pane of this "deck veranda". I knew that I could stand just one minute more before turning into an icide myself. Or I could avoid this by retreating into the 'heat-conditioned" forward lounge I wondered which would be the chilliest choice. With every retirement of a would be harbour gazer, unlimited cubic feet of arctic air flooded the warm interior of the ship. No one thanked him, and looks could approach lower temperatures than any of the below-zero blasts that swept around the decks.

BELOW ZERO! The 'tabloids', which had been brought aboard at quarantine, and were being sold amongst the 'thinblooded' huddling inside, screamed that it was "SEVENTEEN BELOW"

I rubbed hard on the glass and again took in what I could The Santa Clara was beside the tall castles of commerce near the Battery Though why on their right? But distance was deceptive and she was gradually easing round I imagined that the ship was mancaviring away from the force of the biggest Hudson ice hunks which were slowly moving downstrer.

Now the Battery had slipped over to the other side of the bows, I thought, I couldn't be sure Yes, it had, and we were making way against the heavy frozen blocks. A ferry boat, travelling across to New Jersey, left a thin black trail which

appeared to quickly freeze over

What a different New York to the one that I had left, with us sharp grey lines standing out against the cloudless blue sky, months before I had travelled down harbour on the top deck of the Santa Barbara, that sailing day, to eatch the first cool becze that I had feit in New York Now all the 19th draught that I required, plus somebody else's share, had numbed my first sur skins I would certainly pay for the earelessness of leaving my heavy coat in London, before I could get another in New York.

The seventh skin was beginning to weaken and, having had

enough, I retreated

Seven reporters had come aboard down harbour, each de-

manding a personal story on the expedition

This meant repetition, which unfailingly dismays me I

could see a batch of them in the lounge around Mont, recording his Andean activities. Instead of introducing another polar blast and letting myself in for a similar interview, I walked to the rear saloon. Through the deck glass I could see ince-blocks all over the hatches. Amongst them the ship's cat was picking its way.

The fellow in front of me was having a tough time as he faced the cross-examination of three immigration officials. He was South American and accompanied by his wife. When my passport had run the blockade and won its "stamp", he told me that this was his first big step away from "the barada". I gathered that his hife had allowed little contact with thungs urban

Six official eyes bored into him.

"And another thing-how much money havya?"

"Senores? Cuantos duros? Trente mil solamente-"
"What's that in American?"

"He says he has only thurty thousand-"

"Thirty thousand dollars?"

The high powered scrutiny from across the table wavered and the three sets of eyes dilated. This was a language which their owners understood. The Americans dug elbows into each other's paunch jocularly——

'Why, there ain't that much money in the world?"

Officialdom took some time to recover from its toke

"Have ya gotta friend ter meet ya? No? Not with thirty thousand 'iron men'? Doncha know someone here? Yeah?

Well yu'll hafta tell'm ta come

But when I was locating my baggage on the whatf I saw the tormented one strolling about unleashed Fortunately money had awaited my arrival in Cuba, but no New York official had made any reference to my pocket book Perhaps I had only metaphorically shidded into America beneath the shroud of genialty following the exposure of that Latin's assets Anyhow, nobody plied me with incrured riddles and I crossed an inobturated threshold to the Promised Land.

The avenues of New York City lay beneath eight or nine inches of snow Heaps of ice blocks stood piled beside the pavements, in some cases to a height of ten feet. The cabdiret who skated me along to the Barbizon Plaza, a forty floor hotel over looking Central Park, had been practising an "act".

'The front treads are good, they hold," he said, "but I slap on the brakes and—ask me what happens!"

"You tell me"

"The back slings around like that, see-?"

"All right, then 'slap' them off again "

But Sammy Rosenheimer, whose identification snapshot and licensed number scowled at the tear seat, had not always enjoyed by roads to gambol his toy upon, like these

'Stranger myself," he enlightened me, practising an unnecessarily malicious broadside around an Overhead stanchion

"California---"

But animated motion on frozen roads and I were strangers, and I put this fact to him, descriptively outlining my recent "automobile-cum-ox" party in South America

"Well, what thahell couldya expect with dago," he threw

over his shoulder "Ya safe in this cab, brother-"

We drew in beside the Fifty-eighth Street hotel entrance,

"Ya stayın' in N'York, pal?"

"Somewhere warm----"

"Yeah, we've certainly collected our packer—but say, why don't you Limeys get wise to the West, 'stead uv sittin' around here?"

"What do you mean?"

"See Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, California—that's my home—they all get plenty heat"

"California? That's about three thousand miles away, isn't

"Sure, I know, but what's three thousand---?"

"It's a long way "

Sammy Rosenheimer shrugged tolerantly

"Yeah, mebbe it is, but listen, us Americans knows you Limeys We knows whatya eat, whatya like, how them English dooks live—us fellers read"

Aha, Sammy read! Appearances could certainly belie their

My bags were filing through the swing doors in the custody of "bell hops" The extra again figure that was the "Doorman" fidgeted with "customer is right patience But the Californian driver's words were still carrying him to ecstatic

heights
"And wodda Limeys know of us Americans?—nothin'
Woddya know of the country?—nothin' So I'll tellya—go

out West—get way out—the West has some lovely people—"

But he broke off suddenly and released his brakes grinning,

apparently considering me stony ground With an 'Ill be seem' ya," his autobatic monster rolled down the icy slope to Sixth Avenue

Yet Sammy's silent surmuse had been wrong. The seed had sown. Why should I shiver in New York, when the "West" had warmth and "lovely people"?

Digging my arms under the loose, soft sand of the artificial beach beside that oversize in lavish swimming pools, I gazed from under a towel through screwed eyes, at the peaceful splendour of green lawns and palms. Amongst these colourful surroundings ping pong was being played in the shade of trees and competition on the archery range nearby, with its big rainbow 'bull's-eyes' contrasting vividly against the bright green grass, was keen

What must be one of the most magnificent 'country' hotels in the world spread its cream-coloured 'Spanish' architecture in the middle of this immense groomed acreage, and rose like a palace above its surroundings The vast "estate" included an aerodrome with asphalt runaways beyond which white-puffs

from a clay pigeon shoot bit the sun light

I wanted to seek out the distant hand of Sammy Rosenheimer and shake it hard and long for its owner's suggestion of
a Californian sojourn I wanted to tell him that here I was out
West at Del Monte enjoying myself more than I had ever
occasion to do before I wanted to say, what he might not
have understood, that Californian sunshine was putting my
pet microbe on a rack This 'ultra violet' had lacked my "anohele bug" in the stomach, and had lad it out for ten-

Del Monte! What a place it was Marshall Steel and I had motored down from 'Frisco in three hours, arriving in time for lunch at the garganiuan restaurant of the hotel which suggested the governmental banquet hall of some Latin empire. That is ff any Latin empire could have achieved the special 'Del

Monte" atmosphere of its interior

When I had absorbed the sun's ray to the point of dizzunces and immersed my parched body again in the large blue pool, we drove to nearby toll gates marking the commencement of the Seventeen Mile Drive, which wound through woods, mountains and frequently alongside the sea My impressions were of amazing bird and animal life whilst against this un spoilt country background were golfers, deer, seals, filmstars and pelicans all within a few hundred yards of one another

And speaking of seals, I saw two swimming by We didn's stop Six seals passed on, dipping in and out of the turquoise Pacific, and heading south We stopped, then motored on again Driving out of the woods once more, we found the sea bobbing with many hundred shapes, black and grey.

'Seals again?"

"Seaweed."

But I am long-sighted-

Again the drive took us back amongst the forest homes of California's affluent. Charles Chaplin has a retreat there. And now the twisting Chevrolet coupé hummed back again towards the swelling blue of the ocean

But what a strange noise that was! A football match? hounds, perhaps? People——?

No Just seals—more seals—lots of seals—seals pouring into that semi sheltered bay between the small rock islands—seals here, there, seals everywhere——

Whiskered heads maneuvred like nobby penscopes about the surface of the water. A thousand soccer balls seemed to be floating in the foam around the two islands that accommodated every slithering body that could keep its grip. A seal convention. We were told that it was permanent.

Slapping their wet flippers on the rocks, these amphibious mammals were shouting each other down, all intent on bettering their vantage points

Whew! What an atoma!

The massed breath of a myriad carnivorous threats

And within a radius of three miles of this odd spot were five golf courses In this estate with its hundreds of miles of bridle paths, there were two Country Clubs, polo fields and fish-

How did we feel about all these surroundings with their continuous and sensuous warmth? Good? Yes, and like spring chickens, for after all, we were at Del Monte. California.

The Old Spanish mission at Carmel, with its white stone tower, typical of many centures of worship in the Andes, so many thousand miles away, marked the end of the Chevrolet's spontaneous dash down the coast. An Irish priest showed us over the old religious centre, producing Spanish relies of Madonnas and implements. He made a point of drawing our attention to the Mission door. How many centuries could we must be to the total the work of the stone of the Catholic father chuckled at the success of his fool proof jest. It was six mondris old, he

## I LEFT ENGLAND

300

said, and they were working on it to create an even more aged

At a "sea-food restaurant" in old Monterey, where Spanish Indians walked the streets, I dealt with steaming clams whilst Marshall consumed abalone. This is a Californian molluse, which when eaten is served on its five inch 'ear-shaped' shell lined with mother-of-oearl.

South of Santa Cruz were a series of 'cider farms' with big pars of apple juice in all stages of fermentation. The road-side shacks displaying these for cheap sale, readily offered a sample mugful of the contents of each cask. When we stopped, it became a most hospitable affair.

Santa Cruz itself is a seaside holiday town with "Loop-the-Loop" machines and a "Giant Dipper" I looked at this once and remembered Coney Island's "Cyclone". No, I preferred to keep the clams and erder

California has several "valleys-of-the-giants". These of course are the "Redwood" districts, though the State is also famous for its firs, and spruce. Amongs its "big trees" is the "General Sherman"—thirty six feet in diameter—and the "Grizzly Giant", three thousand eight hundred years old. Think of it! Have we anything to eclipse that record?

of it! Have we anything to eclipse that record?

On the way to Del Monte we had passed through a redwood preserve, and lunched at its immense log restaurant, down the middle of which a river, with trout, poured over rocks. Beside this stood the tables. Yes, a river and a waterfall actually in a restaurant and bordered by giant trees growing inside the roof. Between these, ferns splayed plentifully and to cross from one side of this restaurant to the other there was a "Japanese" humped bridge. Lunch varied in price from six shillings to eight and the name of the restaurant was called Brookdale Lodge. Poems on its luncheon tables offered greetings to patrons:

"Hail guest we know not whom thou art, If friend we greet thee hand and heart, If stranger such no longer be, If foe our love shall conquer thee."

The "love" of Brookdale Lodge has also conquered film stars Two internationally known actresses dissected "Rainbow Mountain Brook Trout" at tables on either side of me.

At Big Basin chipmunks rushed our from the 'Giants' and practically climbed into the car They came for peanuts. Blue pays waited about to pick up any that the chipmunks dropped, and a deer nosed forward readily, anticipating a sandwich.

Stanford University at Palo Alto, California, is the most beautiful that I have ever seen. Out of intensely "dry" country it has tom fertility for its bright green lawns, splayed palms, and clipped hedge trees. The lay-out of the exquisite whole appears to have been atranged and perfected with complete disregard for expense. It has a "vallage" of white fratentity and sorrorry. houses? "sinded by peaceful leafy trees and nearly every building earnes an insignia of Greek, lettering on the door. There is a massive, elliptical, "white" football stadium seating nincey thousand.

The Varsity itself, which flavours in every way of Mexico, is—as far as I can remember—"done" in a shade of cream-pink stone. If that sounds too hideous let me assure the reader that it is not.

We parked the car and walked under "The Arthes" which spread around the main buildings. The flagged paving beneath them held a line of metal plaques let into the floor, one for every year of the Varsity's existence. The Arthes lead round the campus to the Memoral Church on a facet of which are coloured frescoes of Christ and his disciples offering supplication to heaven. Above the paintings stands a stone cross

It was the many beautiful frescoes and the stained windows which held my attention more than the magnificent rounded architecture of the interior. It is worth a visit to Stanford solely to see this chapel.

There was the Mausoleum backed by stone columns and guarded by two 'Egyptian' sphinizes in a 'palm shaded' corner of the gardens and, elsewhere, a delicately sculptured monument to the winred Annel of Grief

The Stanford Union Building, with twin "Spanish" minarets and hedge-creepers growing above the arched porch to the third floor, faced a drive and small patches of clipped lawn.

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The Herbert Hoover Building, with its modernistic sharp rectangular outlines, allowed entrance between two massive conical hedge-trees. Stanford's beauty perhaps defeats its own object. There are wings awaiting the mind that lends itself to these delightful surroundings.

JAON GOOMTTON: SHIP 

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the Herbert Hoover Building, with its modernistic sharp actingular outlines, allowed entrince between two massive conical bedge-trees. Stanford's beauty perhaps defeats its own object. There are wings awaiting the mind that leads itself to these callightful surroundings.

LHE HOLTAMOOD BOAL



## CHAPTER XXX

FROM the 'soft lighted' circular sky lounge of San Francisco's tallest hotel, the Empire, I looked through the dusk over the brilliant electrical kaledoscope of the city Away up on the steep and expensive Nob Hill to my left glowed the fashionable 'Mark Hopkins'.' Towards the harbour in front of me the city buildings gradually grew in steps and stars past Union Squire, where I was staying at the "51 Francis" to be finally dominated by the structures of the Shell Company and Standard Oil 'Frisco's main thoroughfare Market Street, slightly to my right, cut through the metropolis to the harbour quay 'On Market Street, by day, I had seen women 'picket' department stores with cites of "This store unfair to organized labour". Patrons of these stores had been booed, there had been scuiffes with the police and I had heard the remark of a passerby to a woman picket—

"You're being trained for a revolution."

"Is that so?" had been the pert, mevitable reply

Strings of lights clung about a shadowed monster that ran above the waterford to a black patch at "mid harbout", in line with the Market Street quay. I knew that this dark grant, topped by four red air beacons, was San Francisco's pinde and opy—"The Brdget"—and the black patch was Yerha Buena (or "Goat Island" as some prefer to know it) the 'stepping-stone' to Berkeley, across the harbour

That is to say the bridge is in two sections and Yerba Buena Island links them both. The "supension cables", a yard in diameter, are composed of thousands of small gauge wires. The bridge has two traffic levels, one for commercial vehicles and the railway. This of course is not to be confused with the smaller, though equally famous "Golden Gate" which bridges the mouth of the harbour.

I stared across the city's illuminations to the dimness sur-

rounding Yerba Buena. There was a further patch to its left. Another island? Yes An artificial one that the city had constructed on shallow water sandbanks "All right, go down and build an island in the harbour

suitable to carry a World's Fair "

What a headache this must have given someone! And this 3 car (1939) the "Fair" is on

Berkeley, which supports the switch back maze of "overroads" sharing its end of the 'Frisco Bridge, is the home of the University of California, Helen Jacobs and Donald Budge. The city, chiefly residential, is a moderate edition of the Olympia Home Exhibition, and appeared to enjoy considerable sunshine This is not always the case with California, the area of which is more than three times that of England and runs seven hundred and seventy miles north and south The Uni versity of California has been heavily endowed by Hearst the newspaper magnate (who possesses a fantastic "empire", which includes a castle, at San Simcon) and others It certainly shows it

Varied impressions of Berkeley flooded my mind and glazed my eyes as I faced its darkened though twinkling horizon-the white Varsity "Tower", the Grecian amphitheatre presented by Mrs Hearst, (mother of the magnate) the "smorgesbord" 'helpyourself' restaurant with its homely Norwegian orderliness---

The kindness of two Berkeley families pervaded my apprecia tive senses as I dwelt on the fact that 'hospitality' had taken on a new meaning in my life. I thought of that all-day drive to the Mount Diablo country club with its old Mexican bactenda I thought of the trips here and there on which nothing had been spared so that a 'Briton' might learn that there was another world 'beyond Brighton" And a very pleasant one I never ceased to wonder at the casual way Americans lent me automobiles and if I didn t borrow many it was only because my national instincts objected

"Don't take a street-car, grab the roadster- or 'He has a car-drop down and pick it up "

The "sky lounge ' Chinese flower girl, with floral pyjamas and blossoms in her dark wavy hair, interrupted my thoughts as she offered me a buttonhole. These Oriental beauties are to be seen in most of the hotels, with their shoulder trave of

exotic Californian blooms 'Frisco has quite a large Chinatown, on the side of a hill, in a busy district----

My mind also drifted to the local Japanese gardens where costumed 'Guldren of the Sun' wander on the flagged nebetween thy ponds and over curved bindges, and where I had taken Japanese tea with wafers—tea that had appeared to be 'lighter' yet stronger than Chinese blends

The circular bar of the Hotel Empire was filling rapidly for "cocktail hour" I thought how the architects of Shinar would have coveted this tower which rose so high above the city?

My view through the glass panel took in the tall ladders of light asserting 'Firsco's claim of being the Manhatan of the West. So this was the intinguing city which had ansen from the shambles of the 1901 earthquake. This in fact was what the spirited survivors had meant when they had cited.

"We'll build a new and better San Francisco"

About an island there is mystery and fascination. And, if it is a Pacific Island——?

To think of New York still in the gmp of see-blocks For again I was soaking up the powerful essence of the sunthine. Once more stimulating ocean breezes slid across my sand warmed body. This time I lay on the beach at Santa Catalina Island forgetting Indians, forgetting moquitoes, forgetting the mud and filth of unending jungle trails My world at present included none of these things Dictators might be surprising nations, 'Gilt Edged' could possibly be in the last stages of collapse, but at the moment I made it no concern of mine I was back with my Pacific—my sun bit, romantic, in vigorating Pacific which for years had broken the routine of my everyday life.

Catalina, twenty miles from the Californian coast in the middle of that blue expanse will, I hope, never be anything more than it is Thousands of wild goats, left centuries ago by Spanish explorers, roam the wild interior. There is boar hunting and, in season, quail. Surefooted Western horses can be fused to take you through fulfs and cañons far from the beaten track where there are hundreds of rare birds, colourful, queer, and exotic—

The season had just closed, but giant tunas (or tunny) had been seen and many 'big game' fishermen were on the island It was on Catalina that I found America's second seal rockery

There are small shops offering Island pottery, shellwork, and other curios. A Mexican or 'Early Californian' flavouring pervades the tourist area of this entirely different world. But the visitor is more inclined to dress the part and blend with the settings of this romanute spot than cheapen it with "noisy vacationing". Each day at Catalina one saw additions to the fleet of yachts which found peaceful anchorage in the 'har bour'. An absorbing attraction was the study of weirdly fascinating ocean floor life seen from the sea windows of glass-bottomed hears.

If you stay long enough on Catalina it gets you I had always thought that one could ture of any 'Happy-carefree-life-get-back to-nature' plan, but when I recently heard a Binshi army major speak of retining to Tahut, I didn't scoff smugly I remembered how hard it had been to drag myself back from the tropical palmed sanctuary of Santa Catalina Island to a crazy world again Yes, I mean crazy I went direct to Hollywood

Arriving with a relaxed open mind and expecting half only of the 'perfect would' which is thrust upon celluloid and shipped in cans to England, I found none of it Except per haps in the matter of food, which everywhere in America is vaned, clean, good, and —contrary to all English rumours on the subject—surprisingly theap

Hollywood, a suburb of Los Angeles, is in effect a stepped up "home exhibition," with no architectural restrictions. But a very quick glance suggests a mushroom settlement of three ply thrown together and white-washed. A strangely quict atmosphere over hangs the whole town. Probably because the white bungalows are set widely apart by lawns with few fences and, furthermore, distances from one part of the town to another are great. Everyone has a car which can be bought 'cx works' at usually half the pince for which the same

American make is sold in England. Even so, in Hollywood quite high prices are realized on second hand cars

Three man boulevards running through the town are known as "Hollywood", "Sunset" and "Santa Monica" Hollywood Boulevard' represents the shopping district, fashionable restaurants like the "Vendome" and "Trocadero" are located on "Sunset", and "Santa Monica" boasts of fruit markets that cover a block

As we know searchinghts announce world premieres or the opening of a bucket shop. It is all the same to the show institutes of the town There must be searchinghts. One finds air liners' turned into petrol stations, restaurants looking like derby hats, "bakenes" in the shape of windmills and an Egyptian and Chinese theatre. In the flagged court of the latter are cement-puts of the hands and feet of celebrated stars and, in the case of Joe E Brown, a mouthput

From beneath guant lettering forming the word stotalwood-LAND, erected against a section of the mountain range that encircles Los Angeles, I looked down on broadcasting stations and a sea of the same inevitable whiteness and palm tree lined avenues. At the busiest traffic section of Hollywood were a few tall buildings. On the day that I arrived I had seen a wounded policeman leave one of them and sit on the paw ment holding his torn shoulder. All ambulances in Hollywood scream and with such a proclamation one had carried away an exprining guiman (who, intent on shooting his harsesed wife, had tracked her to a lawyer's office) and the body of a second policeman, who had taken part in subsequent gun play

Not forming part of Hollywood, but close to Beverij Hills is Westwood Village If in any way it could be normally termed a "village", it is at least a very smart and fashonable one. There are several dress salons here and many Californians augment their wardrobe from them.

The restaurants in Westwood Village are attractive, quiet and again inexpensive. The roofs of some of them are open and Spanish fountains splash languidly in the offing.

Houses in Beverly Hills are white editions of those that one might see anywhere in England or elsewhere. But the fact that their lawns are unfenced (though occasionally hedged), and usually bordered by two species of palm trees within a few yards of each other, makes residence there seem attractive.

In such a part of Beyerly Hills, I called on an ex British officer friend of Eric, who has risen to heights as a film actor His home, again done in the usual white style, was set well back from the drive by a garden lawn Behind the house in another lawn was a swimming pool and beside it a private 'English pub", a very good imitation of the real

He was just off to New York to be initiated into some club

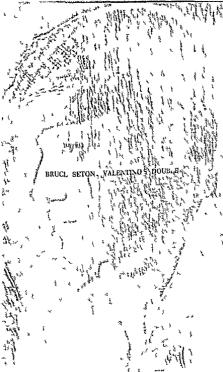
bearing his name "Long way," he said, "they want to adopt me-lot of rot-"

I noticed a great many pseudo "English accents" amongst the film aspirants, but my friend after many years away from home happens to have retained a normal cultured voice Accompanied by his wife and small daughter, I dined with him afterwards at the "Vendome" and was surprised to hear one of England's leading stage and film actors speaking hundred per cent American, at the next "table booth". The attractive inflections and manner of emphasis of the American voice are easily absorbed

My general impression was that Hollywood, despite its searchlights, is a very quiet, ordinary little town which the unflagging energy of studio propaganda departments has somehow managed to sell to the world as a second Mecca

From its patchy, 'ribbon-development' appearance it was difficult to appreciate the fact that fortunes are squandered daily inside the walled estates that are the film studios There are not many of them actually in the suburb, but Radio Pictures, Paramount and Columbia still have their lots in Hollywood

I was taken into two of them The process of "getting in" (in both cases) consisted of stepping from the street into a bare waiting room, giving your name, which was referred to someone at the other end of a telephone, and then, at the "okay" signal, pushing through a swing door into the world beyond There are usually many people around the "entrance-desks" and the regular employees march in and out, so that if the



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'film struck' cared to "crash the studios" I should imagine that it would be easy, despite the fact that there are police inside. These "cops" are ever watchful for cameras and pounce on any that they see being taken near open air filming

Inside there are usually many square buildings called "stages" These are the actual studios and there can be as many as twenty in the grounds of one company Usually they are a dull yellow colour because this photographs as "white", and real white dazzles the camera when the outside walls are used as backgrounds 'They photograph well in this "buff" colour. which approaches the shades of make-up used by movie actors

Wild-eyed Punjabis roamed the grounds of one studio These were actually "hundred per-cent Californians" in flowing robes and artificial whiskers, "crowd working" for a "North west frontier" film. In one studio I watched a music maestro supervise the blending of recently orchestrated strains of music at a 'mixing panel' This resembled the radio-room of an ocean liner and enabled the experimenters to soften the harshness of any particular instrument being played.

Inside one of these film "estates" there were pieces of every thing that make up the artificial world of the screen Half a church slapped up with rough wood, and painted to deceive the eye, was propped next to the ramparts of 'bits" of a "castle". There was an 'English river' passing beside both sets, a fake garage, a "gold rush" saloon bar, a section of a big American city that could have been labelled as New York or any other metropolis. It was all very fine and calculated to deceive the cinema goer, but one could not help realizing how cynical "camera-crews" must become with nothing ever actually being what it seems,

And the extremist affluent life played on the gilded interior 'sets' from dawn ('be ready made-up and on the set by cight") until occasionally late hours at night, must create strange values in the minds of the hard working actors and actresses And in fact in the mind of all star gazers. For there amidst such surroundings new constellations have appeared -the lines of Venus have been re-interpreted-and Valentino

was 'born' to a world of unrequited women

But for some intangible reason I found it difficult to asso-

crate the phenomenon of Rudolph Valentino with the stark 'ribbon-development' atmosphere of Hollywood (apart from the inevitable realization that anything is possible in this extraordinary corner of the world) At the same time I wondered how long Hollywood will be before it becomes really conscious of his rising double, the ex Black Watch British film star-Bruce Seton-who has not only Valentino's appearance but his vitality as well We saw him with Harding and Rathbone in "Love from a Stranger"

Against the green lawns of the studio, which were obviously to be filmed as part of a sanatorium park, cameramen led a tape to the face of a "stand in" Incidentally film artists rest or go over their 'lines' during the preliminaries to 'shooting' and the "stand ins" submit to the experiments of the men behind the camera There are usually cables running everywhere, a script girl checking dialogue and costumes, a collection of fawning 'Yes men' pushing canvas chairs under squat Hebrew directors, and a great deal of movie argot. Even in day time highpowered lights are occasionally used, and these working in conjunction with sun trapping reflectors make a point of showing the GREAT AUDIENCES OF THE WORLD that California is good to people

In this particular 'shooting', a lisping child invalid was to 'wheel-chair' into the legs of a well advertised actress who had become, for these purposes, a nurse. After one or two lines of dialogue, the script directed that the actress should wheel the infant girl away I found it interesting to note the difference between the sympathetic warmth of the 'nurse's' expression during the shooting and the subsequent disgust with which she pushed the chair away, following the words "Okay,

But these scenes are often taken several times and the tension preceding the repetition of previously bungled lines must sink its teeth into the nerves And coupled with this there is the blinding glare of exaggerated lighting

I once met an American ex film star in London He had given acting a good run for its money, but his eyes were streaming constantly, the inevitable toll exacted for his success

"All ready? Ready? Then quiet-

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"Outet!"
"Quivet!"
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"Our yer!"

"Tum 'em over . . ."

One of the crew holds a sign before the camera and with a "Scene-two-fifty-four-take two," snaps down a clapper The camera turns silently for about thirty seconds recording the action occurring within its range. The dialogue is picked up by an over-hanging microphone on a gibbet like arm and is primarily recorded on the side of a separate piece of film,

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"Cuti"
"Cut!"
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"Curl"

"Well, what tha --- ?" "Do it again-that was lousy----!"

The dresser darts out armed with a comb and lightly touches the loose confure of the actress who is wriggling her costume back into shape.

"Okay, now quiet, everybody, please--"

"Quiet!" "Quiyetl"

"Qui-rer!"

"Roll'em . . ."

The "clapper boy" comes out again-

"Scene-two-fifty four take-three!"

The reluctant glimmer on the Channel so far away below the Belgian air liner suggested, through the window at my side, that time also had wings Yet almost as I slipped the cuff back from my watch those familiar white 'buttresses' slid around the big pneumatic wheel.

England-England, and Dover-

What a stimulating sight! Nothing looks as good as homewe know that-but the soft green orderliness of the very prim fields which were already sliding under the big monoplane—the fine old oaks probably older than the castle they encircled—the disciplined hedges that wound and twisted with the narrow little lanes-the cow or two, and a capped figure with a stick----

All these things were paradoxically crashing my straying nationalism back where I could see it.

Hounds? Yes, by Himmel, there were hounds and a hunt winding home along the ribbon directly below us

"Pink" coats! I thought at once of the last horsemen I had seen on those burning Texas plains

And now, underneath, there were red roofs as well as coats, with red brick houses, and English smoke curling up smugly into the spring air

Why should any man ever try to "get away beyond Brighton" when his heritage was at least a spiritual share in this "blot of land" beneath me

What an "emerald isle" it was I thought of Catalina—that sun lit palm shaded sanctuary in the warm aura of Southern California's Pacific. No—there was of course no possible classification. One was "everything", the other just a minute occan speck to which I had been an alten, to this other slipping beneath the Folker I had some claim.

My mind skated round the odd things with which I had identified myself since walking off Southampton dock to cross the Atlanto: I thought of that cold Canada and the extreme heat of the Arizona deserts: I remembered the dirt around Chicago and the "humping-off" of "Machine Gun" Kelly—said to have been responsible for the notonous May Day massacre—in that city

And what a welcome had been given me in Yorktown, Virginia, by Mr and Mrs Gary Fletcher Odd that impressions of Havana brought chiefly visions of bright ties and a visit by Bernard Shaw How strange it had been that such a beautiful swimming pool should have been one of the few signs of crylization at that important Columbian port—Buenaventura

civilization at that important Columbian port—Buenaventura Altogether I had trailed twenty five thousand miles since I left England It was a surprising total, a distance, in fact, approximately equal to the circumference of the World

What had I gained? Half an hour ago, perhaps, I shouldn't have realized as fully as I did now But I knew what it was An appreciation of my people? Yes And, what seemed just as important—a better understanding of others in those New Worlds which I had left I could more positively never identify

myself in any way with the band of ignoramuses envisioning Americans as odd specimens liable to wear their hats and check suits into Westminster Abbey saying. "If I like it I'll buy it."

Rather I thought of the immeasurable kindness, hospitality, intelligence and sensitivity of Americans, and considered it a pity that the English cinema goer must see that New World through extraordinary Hollywood I realized that there wasn't any such animal as the "typical American". How can a person in a country of that size be typically any one thing? To class a Chicago meat packer with a Georgian plantation owner might sound easy, but it's about as excellent a comparison as it would be to liken the people of one side of Europe to the other

And never would I dismiss South American revolutions in the vein of the London strap-hanger, from whom I once caught the comment "just another 'greaser' circia"; an reference to some Latin insurrection. I realized now, the fiery, vital ambitions of those great men in that Southern Continent who, in the case of some countries, are sensitive to the fact that they are "behind", but who, with more than half their country in the grap of fever infested jungles, have an uphill job ahead of them.

Nationalism Its seed is strong in these Latin Americans so anxious to "catch up".

There are critics of the government in every nation of the world. In some countries of South America where the military heads move figuratively and socially over the same ground as the Government and where education is not sufficiently far reaching to be as appreciated as force, the critics choose the way that they know brings results. Revolution It's something that the impainent unenlightened mind can appreciate, warm to, and understand.

To develop the Oriente of a country like Ecuador costs money To bring quick results there must be expeditions to map these unknown jungles and uncover their sources\*of wealth After fitting myself out to make the trip that I did into the Orient I often wonder how the immense sum that must be needed to keep men going "in the field" is raised. But expeditions go to the Articia and the Antarctic Circles and somehow manage to meet expenses. It amazes me.

The air-liner was slowly losing height and I could see Croydon ahead. In a matter of minutes I should be "taking tea and toast" in comfort at an English fireside. Thought of this brought contrasts of Oriente discomforts to my mind. I thought of Eric and the last reports of him in New York. According to the final messages he had penetrated into the jungles of the Ssabelas and had not been heard of since "Sparks" usually active radio had been strangely silent---

Completing the half-circle and banking vertically the threeengined Fokker finally levelled out again and its big doughnut wheels touched, with a bump, on Croydon aerodrome

At the official Customs demand that every bag should be opened, I wondered with amusement what appraisal would have been placed on the "grey-hasted" shrunken head of some Jibaro "grandmother" which had been offered to me at a "bargain price" in Ecuador

A few days later, a London paper carried the headline:

"BRITON LOST AMONG KILLER TRIBE"

They meant Eric

THE END